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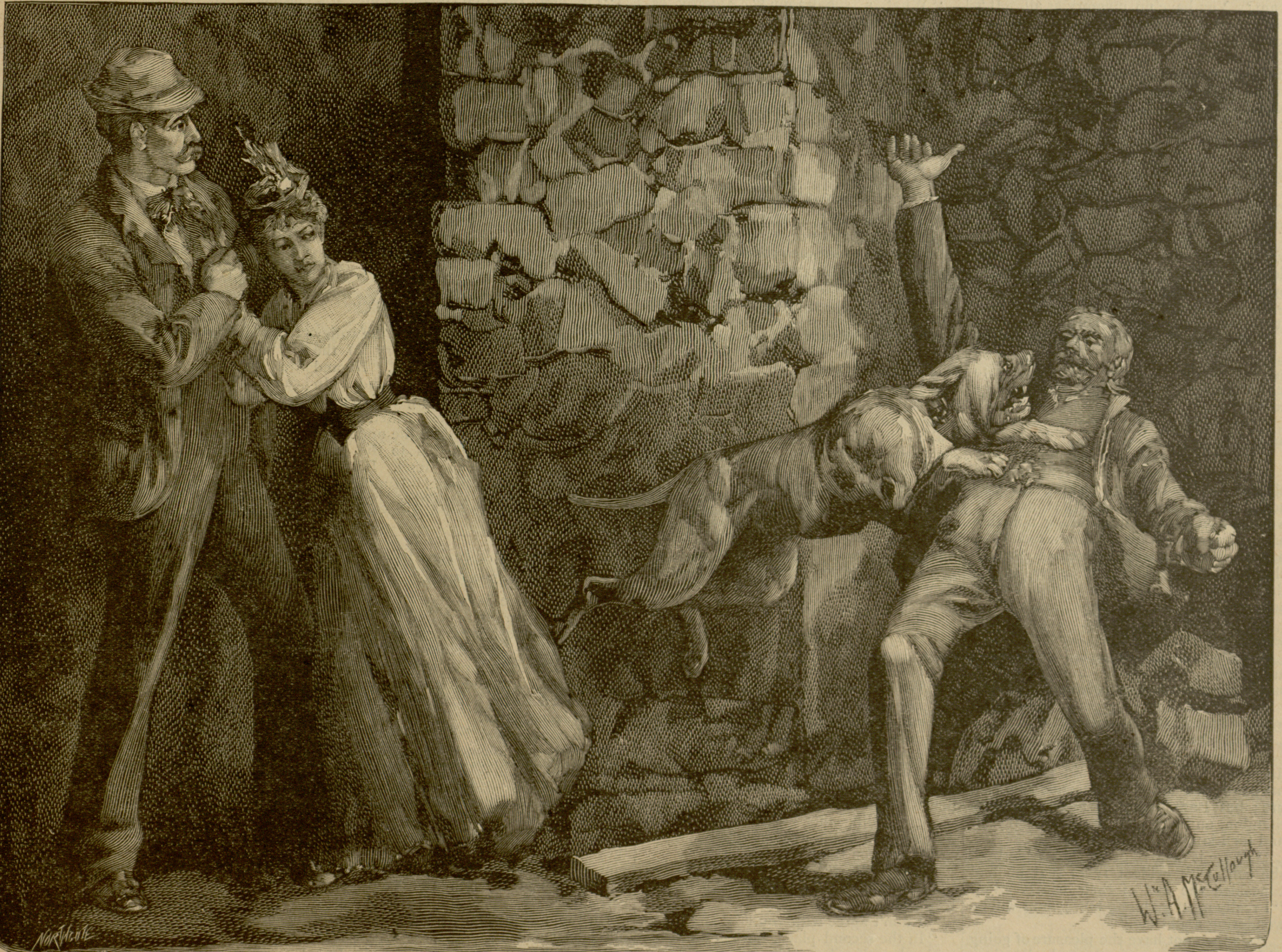

"THE DOG LEAPED UP, AS IF GLAD OF THE TASK, AND THE MAN WAS AGAIN PENNED IN THE CORNER."

THE SHADOW OF THE MILL.[*]

BY HOWARD M. HOKE.

[*This Story is Complete in This Number.*]

CHAPTER I.

A COVEY OF PARTRIDGES.

A YOUNG girl, seated upon the bank of a rippling brook, in the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania, her fair hair curling down over her face, was intent upon a tale of love. She was unmindful of the beauty of the scene about her and of the fact that she was its most charming feature. She dwelt on the words:

> "He looked into her eyes and said: 'I love you.'"

The brook purled as if rejoicing at its escape from the dashing fall through the silent, green-encrusted waterwheel which had once supplied power to the old mill. This was a crazy structure, unused for years, and, though now little more than a ruin, it made a picturesque foreground to the stretch of sun-lighted valley and the distant blue mountain. Its shadow rested upon the girl, which circumstance would have been solemnly regarded as a sure omen of evil by the older and superstitious inhabitants of the neighboring village.

She read the climax of the love-scene triumphantly and with the rapturous interest of maiden fancy, and raised her head as if to tell some one she had thought it would so end. As she did so, she saw a young man standing near and watching her with open admiration. She instantly drew the broad brim of her straw hat over her face and started hastily reading.

He was clad in a hunting-costume, his gun hanging, muzzle-down, from under his arm, while a fine dog sat close at his heels and seemed, too, to be admiring the girl. A glance would have shown that he was city-bred and undeniably handsome. Her glance had shown her the latter fact, which soon impelled her coyly to turn her head so that her right eye darted another look from under the hat-rim.

He stepped forward, laughing pleasantly, and said:

"Pardon me, but do you know you have ruined the first shot I have had a chance to make to-day? When you spoke, you scared a covey of partridges hiding in the bushes there, and I could not shoot without hitting you."

"You shouldn't speak to me, sir," she said, shading her face from him and pulling at the long grass.

"Shouldn't I?" he repeated, humorously. "All I wanted to know was if you 're not sorry you spoiled my shot."

"Not very," she confessed, glancing quickly up at him. "But where did the partridges fly?"

"Across the brook into that elder-hedge yonder."

"Perhaps you could get them now."

"Ha, ha!" he laughed, teasingly. "Probably I could get them now, but I don't want them. I'd rather stay and talk to you."

He rested the gun against a tree and sat down upon a fallen trunk.

"But you shouldn't; I don't know you."

"But I know you."

She shot a big-eyed inquiry from under her hat.

"Yes; you are Miss Bessie Standon. To be square with me, you should know who I am; so, I 'm John Alderby."

The dog ran to her and wagged his tail as if to vouch for his master and to help establish friendly relations.

"I really oughtn't to talk to you; but how do you know me?"

"I 'm visiting a friend of yours, Dan Huddlestone. I came only yesterday. I saw you on your porch at dusk last evening, and I asked him who you were."

"Oh!" she said, patting the dog. "You know him? Perhaps I dare talk to you, then. I 'd like to," frankly; then mischievously: "You don't look savage."

"On the contrary, I feel decidedly amiable for a hunter who has tramped all day without a shot. But Dan will be here presently. He 's hunting up the other side of the run. In the meantime, you can read on, if you think you shouldn't talk to me, while I clean my gun. Dan will introduce us. You needn't say a word to me until then, and I won’t talk to you; for, of course, we shouldn’t say a word to each other before we’re introduced. You won’t object to my talking to my dog Lion, though, will you?”

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“No. I couldn’t prevent that.”

“And, of course, you can talk to a dog without an introduction; so, if you say anything to Lion, I won’t object.”

She could not resist flashing an amused smile at him.

“Very well,” he said, laughing, “we’ll begin now not talking to each other, will we?”

“Yes.”

She took up her book, and he loosed the gun-barrel from the stock. Then, with a merry twinkle, he said:

“Lion, how often am I to tell you who I am? You have no memory at all. It’s not a week since I told you that I am the son of Thomas Alderby; that I live in New York; that I have just finished a course in civil engineering; and that I am now awaiting an appointment to help survey a railroad in Brazil. There, now, don’t forget it again.”

She smiled at the book.

“Lion, you and I always like to see young ladies interested in *history*, don’t we?”

“Come here, Lion. You must not have too good an opinion of me, and you must never tell any one, but this is only a novel.”

The dog barked half-savagely, as if warning any one to dare think she was doing wrong to read a novel. She reached over and, patting him said:

“Now, Lion, I must bid you good-bye. It is time for me to go home.”

“Are you forgetting your manners, Lion,” Alderby said. “Why don’t you ask her not to be in a hurry. Ask her to stay awhile—at least till Huddlestone comes.”

“No, Lion, I really cannot stay any longer.”

“But tell her that Dan is coming now.”

Huddlestone had come in sight from the elder-hedge and began picking his way across the brook on projecting stones. He was not a handsome man, being tall, thin and awkward, and his black mustache and beard only partially concealed an ill-shaped face. A shade of anger was in the look he cast upon the couple, but he advanced and said, not unpleasantly:

“Good afternoon, Bessie. I am glad to see you enjoying this fine afternoon.”

Alderby detected restraint and annoyance upon Bessie’s face, and from them surmised unsatisfactory relations.

“I see you have company. Have you met my friend, Mr. Alderby?”

“No,” she replied, blushing.

“I have been waiting for you to introduce us, Dan. I am afraid Lion and I have intruded upon her afternoon’s pleasure; but I am happy to meet you, Miss Standon, and beg your pardon for myself and for Lion.”

“There is none to grant, Mr. Alderby,” she said, with evident relief that he had concealed the fact of their conversation. “I really must go home now; aunt will be wondering about me.”

“Can we not have the pleasure of going with you? You are through hunting, aren’t you?”

“Y-e-s,” Huddlestone replied. “I intended going back for some partridges I saw across the hedge, but it makes no difference if you want to go to town.”

Across the sedgy land by the brook, through a tangled blackberry patch, into the woods, where squirrels frisked and birds chattered, where the bright sunlight fell in long shafts, and where the air was laden with the scent of pine and leaves—they walked, Huddlestone half sulkily behind, Alderby with Bessie, and Lion trotting soberly, as if fearing that his master’s mind was turning from himself.

“May I call this evening?” Alderby asked, taking leave at her door.

“I should be pleased,” she replied, in innocent frankness.

Huddlestone went with him reluctantly. Alderby suspected the reason, but said nothing. The man’s moroseness deepened at Bessie’s unrestrained welcome, and he sat a solemn auditor of the light chatter of new acquaintance. Alderby was happy until the door opened and Miss Mehitable Timms, the aunt, entered.

Her appearance was enough to mildew any happiness. Alderby’s first thought was of vinegar. She was tall and angular and dressed with studied plainness. The high tortoise-shell comb inclined not the sixteenth of an inch from the perpendicular, and the long black curls, which clung to her shoulders, looked as if they had been stiffened into springs by the rigidity of her face. All geniality had faded long ago from her life. Her manner proclaimed strong opinions, and her “Good evening, Mr. Alderby” rasped.

Huddletone’s manner instantly changed to almost servile politeness, and his tone rang satisfaction when he was able to swing the conversation to commonplace matters, into which Miss Mehitable entered with a sharp vigor that compelled silent attention. She branched from condemnation of a neighbor to an account of how, in a late trouble in the Mite Society, she had twisted everybody around her little finger, and how in a former one she had “scared” everybody, especially the men, into submission. She directed all this straight at Alderby, and abruptly ended with the statement that it was time for good people to be in their beds.

Huddlestone rose at once, and Alderby could only follow; not, however, without assuring Bessie that he would see her again.

“What a she-dragon!” Alderby exclaimed, going homeward.

“Yes,” Huddlestone assented; then, after a short pause, he added, pointedly: “I never saw any one, man or woman, whom she couldn’t conquer.”

Alderby was already so strongly impressed by Bessie that he mentally said:

“We shall see.”

CHAPTER II.

OPEN RIVALRY.

A week of good hunting weather followed, and the two young men scoured the country even to the mountains. But Huddlestone shot all the game. He frequently found his friend sitting moodily under a fallen tree. An hour each evening they were permitted to see Bessie; each time Huddlestone effusively received the aunt, and Alderby was made the target for a recital of proud victories; and each time they were abruptly invited to depart. Thus, Alderby was afforded little chance for better acquaintance with Bessie, but love can make swift strides in thought. She was in his mind more and more each day, and he made the most of that brief, blissful spell before the aunt’s appearance.

One fine afternoon, when the game had been unusually plentiful, Huddlestone suddenly came upon Alderby lying dreamily upon the grass by a mountain brook. His gun rested idly over a stump, and Lion lay sleepily watching him. Huddlestone sat down on a log before the dreamer, and asked:

“Are you building that Brazilian railroad, John?”

“No, I’m thinking of Bessie Standon.”

“What of her?”

“That I love her, of course.”

Huddlestone jumped to his feet, and an ugly look crept from under his beard. Alderby, prepared for it, coolly waited.

“You’ve made quick work,” said Huddlestone. “It’s only a week since you met her.”

Disregarding this, Alderby awaited the development of the man’s temper.

“Don’t you think it’s foolish?”

“No. Why?”

“Well, in the first place, she doesn’t love you.”

“I don’t agree with you.”

“In the second place, her aunt has her under her thumb, and everybody else, for that matter. She has never married, and boasts that Bessie never will. You may be sure she’ll not allow you to frustrate her plans.”

“She’ll not *allow* it, probably.”

“Talk is cheap. Let me tell you that Bessie’s father was killed in the Civil War and her mother died when she was four years old; so that she has had no instructor but Aunt Mehitable. You had better give her up.”

“No, I’ll not give her up, Dan.”

“Do you mean to say you’ll defy Aunt Mehitable?”

“Certainly.”

“A pretty figure you’ll cut, defying her.”

“Dan, we have been friends, and each is entitled to frankness. If what you have said is only *advice,* I do not accept it. I love Bessie, and am not afraid of a Roman phalanx of Aunt Mehitables.”

“‘Only *advice!*’” echoed Huddlestone. “What do you mean by that?”

“All that it implies; doubt of your regard for me and the belief that you want Bessie yourself.”

“Did *she* tell you so?”

“No. I guessed it from your face the day you introduced us, and I have seen it in your manner since. I’m not blind, Dan. It’s weak of you to try to scare away a man’s love with a maiden aunt. You ought to know me better. Own up, Dan. If we’re rivals, let us be friendly ones. Here’s my hand on an honorable rivalry and good wishes to the man who wins.”

Huddlestone drew himself up and clasped his hands behind him.

“You won’t take my hand?”

“On such an agreement—never! Do you suppose that, after seeing that girl grow up under my eyes, watching her day after day growing more lovely, and each day feeling her dearer to me, that I will allow you, a stranger, to take her from me. No, I won’t let you. I shall do all I can to hinder you.”

“It is *you*, now, Dan; not Aunt Mehitable.”

“Yes, it is.”

“And you professed to be my friend,” Alderby said.

“I am so no more.”

“So be it. I will not attempt to change your mind. Of course, you have as good a right to win Bessie’s love as I have, but no better, and I’ll not step aside. Your anger springs from your knowledge that your love is hopeless—”

“Take care, Alderby!”

“Oh, don’t threaten, Huddlestone. It’s wasted breath. The more you say the more I am convinced that Bessie has repulsed you time and again.”

Huddlestone’s face grew livid with rage, as he strode to Alderby, and said:

“You are lying.”

“Stop right there!” commanded Alderby.

“I order you to leave this place.”

“I shall stay until I have asked Bessie to be my wife. Neither you nor Aunt Mehitable can hinder me. Only one thing will turn me away, and that is ‘No’ from Bessie herself.”

“You will get no chance to ask her.”

“You mean to prevent it?”

“I do.”

“It is underhanded hostility, then.”

He struck down the mountain.

The setting sun was flooding the valley with crimson. The quiet glory of the scene begot sorrow in his heart. He and Huddlestone had been college friends. In fancy he saw this man’s long and repugnant siege of Bessie’s love, aided by the grim old aunt, and her hard life under the circumstances. He hurried to the town and took a room at the hotel. Early he hastened to Bessie’s home. Huddlestone had already begun hostilities. He was refused admittance.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE MILL.

The next three days were torture to Alderby. Hunting palled, and his repeated knocks at Bessie’s home brought the sour-face Mehitable and sharp repulses. He once attempted to argue with her, but she rudely bade him mind his own business, to go back where he belonged, and stop annoying decent folks.

“I’ll conquer yet,” he declared.

But the case seemed hopeless. There was no way for him to see Bessie, who, he easily surmised, was being kept a prisoner. He knew that Huddlestone was still welcome to the house. He felt sure, however, that Bessie detested the man, and that they would not dare force her to marry him. His greatest fear was that he would be summoned to join the engineering corps before he could tell her his love.

On the fourth day, lounging about the hotel became unbearable, and he started for a long tramp. He made a wide, restless circuit, but was finally charmed by a spot near the old mill. Often he had recalled each detail of meeting Bessie there, and he approached it now, intending to sit there and try to think out his difficulty. So intent had been his thoughts that he had not noticed, until near the place, that a storm was coming. Emerging from behind a bush, he started in glad surprise.

Seated at the same place as before was Bessie; not now reading but musing. Lion instantly leaped forward and frisked joyfully around her. She turned her head and saw the young man approaching. Her look of delight set his heart bounding.

“Miss Standon,” he said, “how did you escape?”

“Mr. Huddlestone and aunt were talking in the parlor and I slipped out.”

“Good!” he cried, humorously. “I hope his infatuation for your dear old aunt will give you this chance often. And why did you come here?” he asked.

A blush ran over her face, and, only half conquering the temptation to confess, she replied:

“I don’t know unless it’s because—well, it is one of my favorite places.”

“Will you tell me what you were thinking of?”

“Why do you wish to know that?”

“Because it must have been very interesting to keep you from noticing the storm.”

She rose alarmed.

“Oh, I must go at once!”

“You couldn’t possibly get home before it breaks. We must go into the mill.”

“No, no—not there.”

“Why not?”

“Because such stories are told of it. The folks say everybody has bad luck who goes into it.”

“It’s only idle superstition. No harm will come to us,” he said, standing close to her and trying to catch the look in her drooping face. “We *must* go there, for see how rapidly the storm is coming.”

It surely was racing toward them—huge rolling masses of blackness, hurling bolts of fire and growling in its monstrous voice. Deep stillness was around the couple, but far away, under the clouds, they heard the gale roaring along the mountain and saw the trees writhing under its power.

“We must run,” he cried, “and the ascent is steep. Will you give me your hand?”

She shyly complied, and thus they hastened up past the wheel. The door was fastened, but Alderby forced the lock from the rotted frame just as the first gust drove a few large rain-drops around them.

Gloomy at all times, the old mill was now ghostly in the black of the storm which now broke in sudden fury. It shook and creaked, the timbers in the loft above straining with sounds like groans of departed millers, and from the distant corners came noises as if the old mill-stones were turning again.

“Don’t be frightened,” he said tenderly. “You are as safe here as at home.”

He led her to a place sheltered from draught, seated her upon an old meal-bin; then, rolling a barrel near her, sat down. The darkness was like night.

“Please don’t be frightened,” he said again.

“I cannot help it; the storm is so terrible, and what will aunt say?”

“Don’t think of her now. Think only that we are together here; that no harm can come to you that I can prevent; and try to be as happy as I am.”

“‘Happy?’” she repeated, raising her eyes to his face in surprise. “How can you be happy here?”

“I—Bessie?” he said, a little nervously. “I could be happy *anywhere*—with you!”

She shrank from him and hid her face behind the brim of her hat.

“Bessie,” he said, “do you remember the sentence you read from the book that day I met you?”

“Yes,” she answered, with still averted face.

“It was: ‘He looked into her eyes, and said: “I love you.”’ Wasn’t that it?”

In the howl of the storm he caught a very timid affirmative.

“Did you know what they meant?”

“No—not exactly,” was the faint answer. “Aunt says I mustn’t know such things.”

“If a young man should say them to you, Bessie, wouldn’t you understand that he meant you were dearer than all the world to him, and that he would want to do everything to make you happy; to take you out into the world from your cross aunt, and put you among pleasant scenes and kind people? You would understand that, wouldn’t you?”

She covered her face with her hands and trembled at his tone, but replied doubtfully:

“Yes, I would know that I was dear to him and that he wanted to make me happy.”

He gently took her hands from her face, and, asking her to look at him, said:

“Then, Bessie, *I* am looking into your eyes, and I say: ‘I love you!’”

She shrank from him, trembling.

“What is it, Bessie? Why do you shrink?”

“Aunt says I must let no one love me or love any one.”

“But you don’t think she is right about that, do you? Your heart tells you just now that she is wrong, doesn’t it?”

She drew her hands from his clasp and began sobbing.

“Why do you cry, little girl?” he asked, apprehensively.

“Oh, I don’t know. No one ever talked so to me, and—and I feel—oh, so—so happy.”

“‘Happy?’” he repeated, joyously. “Have *I* made you happy?”

Again came a very timid “Yes” from under the hat-brim.

“Look at me, Bessie. Do you mean that you love me?”

She turned to him shyly and answered:

“I’m not sure what love is; but I think that must be what makes me so happy.”

They had forgotten the storm, but were now reminded by a terrific peal of thunder. It seemed as if all the wrath of the tempest had concentrated above and fallen upon the mill. She cried in fright; and he caught her in his arms, rapturously blessing this burst of the storm.

“Bessie,” he said, “will you be my wife? Will you let me take you to our home in New York, away from your aunt?”

She nestled close in his arms, and

though the storm whistled shrilly through the gaps in the shattered building, his eager ear caught the reply:

"Oh, how happy you have made me."

"Hoost! Hoost!" grated a voice near them.

In a flash of lightning they discerned a bent, withered woman glaring at them. Bessie trembled, and whispered:

"Oh, let us go away from this place! She is old Mother Carson, the fortune-teller!"

"Don't be alarmed," Alderby soothed; then asked of the woman: "What do you want, mother?"

"To warn you that a curse rests upon this mill. No one that ever ran it ever prospered, and I tell you that unfortunate will be the lovers who plight their vows under its roof, as you have done."

"Begone!" commanded Alderby. "We want none of your superstitious maunderings here!"

"Scoff, young man, scoff at me if you will; but you will learn to know that I've spoken truly. I like little Bessie Standon, and I wish her well; and I believe you, John Alderby, would make her happy, for you both love sincerely; but you have told each other your love in this place, where many have begun their ruin, and now it's too late. Ill luck will come to you."

As if to corroborate her words, Lion suddenly leaped, growling, to the door. It was roughly thrown open and Huddlestone appeared. He stopped abruptly. Lion had crouched savagely before him, ready to spring at a forward step.

"Alderby, are you here?" he demanded.

"Yes, I'm here," the lover replied, stepping forward.

"Take your miserable cur away."

"Not until you give some indications of being a gentleman."

"Is Bessie here?"

"Miss Standon is—yes."

"Well, I have come with a carriage and a command from her aunt to bring you home with me instantly.

"You will take me with her, Dan," Alderby quietly observed.

"I'll do nothing of the sort!"

"Then, Mr. Huddlestone," said Bessie, stepping forward and speaking with a spirit that delighted Alderby. "I will not go with you. I will not leave him alone in this place."

Huddlestone moved angrily toward her, but a growl stopped him.

"Your aunt shall know of this."

"Tell her!" she said, pouring out the accumulated scorn of years. "The time has come for me to assert myself against *you* and her. I have been alone against you before, but now I have some one to help me. Have I not?"

"Through your whole life," cried Alderby, walking to her side.

"Mr. Huddlestone," she continued, "you may as well give up your pursuit of me. I am old enough to know my heart, and there is no love in it for you. You will please take us both home."

"Beware what you are doing!" Huddlestone warned, wrathfully. "I think it my duty to watch over you. This man is not to be trusted."

"He was your friend a week ago," Bessie said, contemptuously.

"We're not afraid of you, Dan," said Alderby, smiling at a suddenly suggested plan; "so I'll call Lion away. Come here, Lion."

The mastiff ran to his master, and Huddlestone instantly moved forward to grasp Bessie and drag her to the carriage. She retreated, and he followed along the wall a few steps, when Alderby cried:

"Watch him, Lion!"

The animal leaped toward the man with a savage yelp and, crouching before him, penned him in an angle of the wall.

"Watch him until I come back, Lion," commanded Alderby. "Now, Bessie, I will drive you home. Good-bye, Dan. My good-natured dog will keep you company and help you into a better frame of mind. Be patient, and I'll be back for you in a few hours."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SHADOW FALLS.

Alderby's knock brought Miss Timms to the door. In all her life she had never been so nearly surprised into speechlessness, as now, upon seeing him instead of Huddlestone.

"Who is in that carriage?" she sharply demanded, when she had recaptured her fleeing composure.

"Your niece."

"Bessie!" she called. "Come in, this minute! And you, sir, leave us instantly!"

"Not so fast, Miss Timms. I propose to come into your parlor and have a talk with you."

"Proposing and doing are different!"

She flew into the house and reappeared with an umbrella. Alderby coolly looked on as she brought Bessie from the carriage to the door, where she commanded him to leave and started to close the door, when he interposed—

"Dan Huddlestone is a friend of yours, isn't he?"

"What is that to you?"

"Oh, nothing in particular; only he is in a rather awkward predicament and is likely to remain so all night."

"Where is he?"

"I'll tell you, on condition of five minutes' conversation with you in your parlor."

"No, sir."

"Very well, just as you say. If you don't want him released, all right."

She saw his determination, and said:

"Come in, then, and make your say brief."

"First," she demanded, in the parlor, "what predicament is Mr. Huddlestone in?"

He told her. She had had the advantage over too many people not to see that Alderby now had it upon his side. He thought he saw faint admiration of his courage, but she sternly said:

"Well, what is your object?"

"Simply to tell you that I love your niece; that I know you oppose me: but that will make no difference."

"Oh, it won't?"

"No. Bessie loves me. You will be doing her a great injury by forcing your views of marriage upon her or by compelling her to marry Huddlestone. She doesn't want him. She belongs to me, now; so I believe you may as well bestow your blessing upon us."

Aunt Mehitable had not shown such consternation in years. She had always met weak submission; here was strong audacity, with chance of victory over her. With increased determination she rose, went to the hall-door and called Bessie. The young girl soon reluctantly appeared.

"Bessie," she asked sharply, "this man says you love him. Is it true?"

With the same spirit shown at the mill, Bessie walked to Alderby and replied:

"Yes, it is true, aunt."

"Very well, then; I don't see what I can do but say so be it. You are throwing yourself away, girl. Young man, come here to-morrow morning at ten o'clock and we will see about this. Not another word will I say until you have released Mr. Huddlestone. Go!"

"Why not arrange it now?" Alderby asked distrustfully.

"Go, I say! I'll not hear another word."

Alderby was soon hurrying millward in the carriage. He could not help distrusting this easy acquiescence.

"That old woman must be watched," he declared. "She will do something yet to prevent our marriage."

He found Huddlestone, weak with rage, still penned in the corner by Lion. A word released him, and the rivals drove to the village.

At precisely ten o'clock next morning Alderby's rap sounded upon Miss Timms's front door. There was no response. His second and third fell unnoticed. He had been too eager to see what now struck a chill to his heart. The house was extremely quiet.

"She has outwitted me!" he said. "My declaration yesterday was too hasty."

A loud chuckle sounded from across the street. Turning, he saw Huddlestone laughing upon his porch. He strode across, and, forcing calmness, said:

"Something amuses you, Dan?"

"I should say so. I was wondering how long you would rap at an empty house."

"Why, have they gone already?" Alderby asked, concealing his dismay and feigning surprise. "I didn't think they would start so early. I do hope they'll enjoy their visit. It's a beautiful place they've gone to, and I look for much pleasure when I join Bessie there."

Anger at the failure of his exultation routed Huddlestone's composure. He hotly said:

"You don't know where they have gone, Alderby."

"Don't I?"

"No. You're outwitted, and, my word for it, you'll never see Bessie again. Ha, ha! Aunt Mehitable is too much for you. I'm dreadfully sorry for you."

"Thanks, Dan."

Alderby turned upon his heel, leaving Huddlestone doubting his triumph. But the young lover was by no means so unconcerned as he feigned. His fear was confirmed. Miss Timms had spirited Bessie away. Where? The old maiden had plenty of money and pluck enough to fly to the antipodes. He hastened to the hotel to begin the chase at once. The landlord handed him a letter. It was a summons to join the surveying party instantly and to sail the following Saturday for Brazil.

The shadow had fallen.

"I'll not go," he declared.. "I know that the appointment is the chance of my life. I may never have another, but my happiness depends upon getting Bessie. It is a choice between business and love, and I decide upon the latter. I'll go home, resign the appointment and find Bessie if I spend my last cent!"

CHAPTER V.

BLACKER.

Arriving in New York, he hurried to his father, who had worked hard to secure the appointment, to tell him of his intention to resign. But a terrible shock awaited him. Bankruptcy had only that morning fallen, and his parents were penniless. The young man saw his duty. He could not now resign. He must make his living. He must go to Brazil at once, and by his labor support his stricken father and mother. He had not even time to seek a clew to Bessie's destination.

The South-American steamer bore at least one heavy heart out to sea the following Saturday. The railroad would require years to complete. Would he ever see Bessie again? Would she soon forget him?

But Alderby had a strong heart. He felt that he was doing right. But it was not without a mighty struggle that he resigned himself to the probability that his love was lost. In the effort to bear up, he threw his whole energy into his work, and soon gained a reputation for skill and accuracy in the corps; but from the heart of the great Brazilian forest through which the line ran his thoughts went out to Purling Brook and the sweetness he had known there.

Surmising that Huddlestone would learn of his going to Brazil and that Miss Timms would return with Bessie to Purling Brook, he wrote a number of letters, but no answers came. He tried to believe that the aunt kept them from Bessie, and not that she had so soon forgotten him. This had been her first love, he knew, and he fought the fear that she might, therefore, soon forget it. The hope that her longing was as ardent as his own alone sustained him in the hardships of his work.

At length there came a letter from Huddlestone, cordial, sorrowful. No one could regret their estrangement more than he did, and he wished for nothing so much as a warm grasp of forgiveness. Their rivalry, he wrote, was now at an end. He had no doubt Alderby had long ago forgotten little Bessie Standon, who was again in Purling Brook. Besides, she was soon to marry a young man she had met on her travels with Aunt Mehitable—a splendid young fellow, who would make her a good husband. As for himself, he was bearing this blow as best he could, in which he was greatly helped by the knowledge of Bessie's unalloyed happiness.

After this, Alderby's associates saw that he was battling a sorrow; but he pushed his work vigorously until near completion, when he was prostrated by a dangerous fever, due to the malarious atmosphere of a swamp through which the line of surveying ran.

CHAPTER VI.

AGAIN IN THE MILL.

Three years sped, and again, on a warm June afternoon, by the brook that still tumbled through the shattered mill-wheel, sat Bessie.

Again she looked up and saw a man standing near, looking at her. But it was Huddlestone. He advanced with undue affability and seated himself upon the fallen tree-trunk.

"Bessie," he said, "I have just come from your aunt."

She looked up, annoyed, and replied:

"You have been worrying her on her sick-bed, and about me."

"Not worrying her; trying to comfort her."

"Why comfort her?"

"I will tell you; but, first, let me say that you have not noticed that a storm is coming, very much like the one we both remember. We will not have time to reach town, so must go into the mill."

She had risen and cast her eyes at the storm. It did, indeed, resemble that former one, rolling clouds hastily toward them. Turning to him, she said:

"You are right; we must go to the mill."

She said nothing as they walked thither, and was so cold that his love must, indeed, have been obstinate to still hope.

The three years had ruinously gnawed the mill. Boards had fallen off, one side was aslant, and weirdness and decay had begotten a dismal progeny of shadows.

She seated herself upon the same bin, while he, ill at ease, stood some feet from her.

"Mr. Huddlestone," she began, "you have something to say. We may as well understand each other now."

"Yes," he assented, "we may. I will not repeat, what you have long known, that I love you. It is of your aunt I want to speak. You know her death may occur even to-day. Her death will leave you without a protector, and she is worried. She sees the error of her teaching, for had she allowed you to marry, it would not be so. But you will be alone, and it is terrible for a woman to be alone in this world. Your aunt's fondest wish is that your heart may turn to me and that we may be married by her bedside. Then you will have one to protect you, who loves you as no other man could. Think of this as your aunt's last wish, and think how it will make her last moments peaceful."

She did not seem to hear him. The storm had broken furiously, but neither heeded it.

"Have you heard me, Bessie?"

She was tightly pressing her hands, and looking thoughtfully down, with trembling lips.

"Have you no answer for me, Bessie?"

"You know that I do not love you, Mr. Huddlestone."

"But you could learn when you see how kind I would be to you. There's nothing you would want I would not grant. But there is one thing more: You will not only be alone. Your aunt has lately lost in speculation, and you will be penniless."

She sank to the floor. He advanced, the storm gloom concealing his look of triumph.

"I will care for you," he said.

"Oh, why—why, was he taken from me? John—John, where are you? Come back to me—come back!"

"You will never see him. He is far away in Brazil and long ago forgotten his promises to you. I alone am left faithful to you. Just two months ago I wrote to Alderby in Brazil, inquiring after his welfare. I saw that you did not love me, and that you would soon be alone in the world. I resolved to sacrifice my love to your happiness, and I wrote him fully of your situation, in the hope that he would return to you, so that you might not be left unprotected."

She had taken down her hands and was looking up at him with a new light in her face—the light of a sudden thought that this man, after all, might be worthy of her, and that his love might finally lighten the grief that had fallen upon her. He saw [illegible] look, and bending low, he said, [illegible] voice, for the storm was shrilly whistling

"But to my letter a reply came yesterday, containing what pains me to tell, but which I do tell to help you drive that unfaithful man from your heart."

She arose, and, looking eagerly at him, said:

"If he is false, Mr. Huddlestone, I can then only try to love you."

"False, Bessie! He is as false as Lucifer. I discovered his unworthiness while he was here, and tried to prevent your loving him. His letter sneers at the love of a country girl; talks of his flirtation with you as a huge joke; and ends by saying that he has just married a wealthy Spanish woman—"

"Liar!"

The word hissed above the crash of the storm.

Both turned, startled, in the direction from which it came, and a flash of lightning showed a pale, haggard man standing near, pointing his finger at Huddlestone. Sharp recollection of the tales of the mill wrought a moment's belief that the ghost of a dead miller stood before them; but again came the word "Liar!" with too much earthly voice and scorn to be supernatural.

"Who are you?" demanded Huddlestone.

"Don't you know me, Bessie?" She cried sharply, springing forward. "John, John, is it you?"

"Yes, my darling," Alderby answered, "and just in time to save you a life of misery. This man is a devil!"

Huddlestone had shrunk into the shadow; but his anger leaping up, he came back, hissing:

"It is easy to talk; not so easy to prove the lie!"

"Bessie," Alderby said quietly, ignoring him. "This fellow wrote me that you were soon to be married. I did not write to him. I am not married to any wealthy Spanish lady, but I love you, only you, Bessie, and I have come back to claim you."

She turned upon Huddlestone in supreme contempt, and said:

"How grandly you lie; how great and

noble is your unselfishness; how splendid was your sacrifice of love to my happiness. Go, go, I don't want to see you—"

She was interrupted by a terrific blast of the storm, followed by a shivering of the mill, the straining of a heavy girder; then, with a ponderous crash, a part of the aged ruin sank into a mass of rotten timber.

"Ha, ha, ha!" rang out a shrill voice.

They saw Mother Carson standing near the gap through which a weird, yellow light shone, throwing her arms about exultantly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" she screamed. "Bessie, the curse of the old mill is broken! Take Mr. Alderby. The shadow is now lifted from you, and you will be happy. But it shall fall upon that man there. See! See! The storm breaks in the west."

A sunbeam, darting through the ragged opening, shone full upon Alderby and Bessie, but left Huddlestone crouching in the shadow.

"Bessie," said Alderby, rapturously, "we cannot believe in the evil influence of this mill, but it was here we told each other our love, and it is here we can resolve to share this predicted happiness. Will you, my darling?"

"Yes—yes, John! I am so happy!"

There came a short, savage bark, and Lion leaped forward as Huddlestone stole to the door.

"Down, old fellow!" shouted Alderby. "Let him go. We need him no more."

"You will see!" threatened Huddlestone. "Aunt Mehitable will appoint me guardian over this girl, and you will never marry."

"I am very glad you told us this," laughed Alderby. "Lion, hold him where he is!"

The dog leaped up, as if glad of the task, and the man was again penned in the corner.

With parting shafts of scorn, they left him and hastened to Aunt Mehitable. Bessie went to her room, and soon returned to Alderby in the parlor.

"Come with me," she said gravely.

"Mr. Alderby," said the old lady, feebly reaching her hand from the bed, "I have been wrong in opposing you. Bessie loves you, and you can have her. I have discovered Huddlestone's villainy. I employed a lawyer to examine his accounts, for he has had charge of my affairs, and he has found that the scoundrel has speculated with my money and kept the profits. The lawyer carried the books from his house only this afternoon; so we have the proof. I will soon die, but I will trust this matter and my niece to your charge."

The lawyer came in soon and accompanied Alderby to the mill. Before calling Lion away, they secured a full confession from the miserable man there.

That evening, Aunt Mehitable grew worse. She insisted upon making a new will, leaving all her property, unexpectedly large, to Bessie; then, with a few parting wishes for Bessie's happiness and regrets for her own harshness during life, she sank to rest.

And within the week, a very happy, hopeful bride and groom left little Purling Brook to enjoy the reputation and prosperity which had come to the latter.

THE END.

ONLY A GIRL'S HEART.*

A MYSTERY OF HADDON'S FERRY.

BY MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

Synopsis of Previous Installments.

[Time: Shortly after the Mexican War. Place: Wilde County, in and about the Alleghanies. Scene: Haddon's Ferry, on the night of a terrific thunderstorm. Gabriel Haddon, the sexagenarian ferryman, while revealing to Gertrude, a lovely, fifteen-year-old girl, that she is not his grandchild but a foundling, is summoned to the deathbed of old General Slaughter. During his absence, in response to appealing cries of "Boat!" from across the river, Gertrude braves the storm and ferries across Sallust Rowley with his horse. She gives them shelter and food. Rowley, a lively chap of twenty, who is at once deeply enamored of her, confesses that he is eluding those who are in close pursuit of him for a deed which, he stoutly asserts, is not disreputable. Gertrude [illegible] deaf ear to the pursuers' repeated cries of "[illegible]oat!"

At Summit Manor, on this eventful night, the eve of her wedding-day, "the queenly, dark-eyed" Geraldine, with her young cousin, Patricia Fitzgerald, is impatiently awaiting the coming of her laggard lover, Col. Gerald Fitzgerald. He has gone to Washington "on business." At early dawn, the women are startled in their vigil by the precipitate arrival of Cousin Rowley, who has been with the delinquent.]

CHAPTER V.

A FEARFUL MYSTERY.

"SALLY! Oh, I am so glad you have come! Though you needn't have butted me over for all that!" exclaimed Patricia, recovering the balance that Mr. Sallust Rowley's impetuous entrance had nearly overset. "But where is Colonel Fitzgerald? Why doesn't he come in?" she inquired, peering beyond him into the darkness of the early dawn.

"Don't ask me, Pat! That 's a brick," cried the young man, in a tremor.

"Why, Sallust Rowley, what is the matter with you? You look as white as a sheet, and you tremble like a leaf. What on earth ails you?" demanded Patricia, noticing for the first time his panic-stricken aspect.

"Don't ask me, Pat, that 's a trump!" exclaimed Sallust, between his chattering teeth.

"I *will* ask you, and you shall tell me. What have you been up to? You look as if you expect to be shot the next minute. What have you done? Have you 'slain a man in your wrath, and a young man to your hurting?'" sharply persisted Patricia.

The youth turned paler than he was before, but he did not reply.

"What, in the deuce, ails you, boy? *Have* you robbed a bank!" demanded Patricia.

"No; but I dread to meet *her!*" exclaimed Sallust, shaking.

"To meet *whom?*" cried Patricia, impaiently.

"*Her*—Gerry! What *can* I say to her?" he groaned, shivering.

"If you have anything to say to *me*, Mr. Sallust Rowley, you had better say it at once," suggested a calm, stern voice, as Geraldine Fitzerald came from the drawing-room and confronted him.

Sallust Rowley drew back, aghast.

"Why is not Colonel Fitzgerald with you? Where did you leave him?" inquired Geraldine, in a voice forced by her own strong will into tones of calmness.

"Don't ask me, Ger—Miss Fitzgerald, I mean. And don't look at me so, please. Your eyes go through and through me like a knife. Don't, please, that 's a brick—I mean a lady! Let me go in and rest myself, please. I am tired almost to death!"

They followed him—Geraldine speechless in astonishment and indignation, Patricia noisy with fright and anxiety.

"Sally!" she exclaimed, peremptorily, "you talk and act like a lunatic, and I am not agoing to stand it—there! You shall tell us, this very moment, what you mean by your mysterious reserve!"

"I can't tell you, Patricia! I can't, indeed! Upon my soul and honor! Don't ask me—that 's a brick!" cried the victim.

"I *will* ask you, and I will make you tell, too, you red-headed ape! Why did not Colonel Fitzgerald keep his appointment and come down with you?"

"I can't tell you! Indeed, goodness knows, I can't!" whimpered Sallust.

"Where did you leave him?"

"What 's the use of asking me, if I can't tell you? It only torments me and enrages you for nothing!"

"*I'll* torment you! Since Colonel Fitzgerald has not come down to-night, *when* is he coming down? This morning? This evening? *When?*" persisted the girl.

"I cannot tell you," persevered the youth.

"Has anything happened to him? If so, what is it? What has happened to him?" stubbornly continued Patricia.

"I cannot tell you," stolidly repeated Sallust. "And I *will* not! There, now, Miss Patricia! I would not—no, not if I were to be put upon the rack!"

"Wish I had the power to do it!" muttered Patricia; "but, never mind. Uncle Fitzgerald will make you tell, I 'll bet!"

"No, he won't, neither! And even if he *should*, you would wish he *hadn't*, now mind you! If ever there was a case where ignorance is bliss, this is one. But he won't, *I'll* bet! I shall be off from this place in ten minutes? I am going away! I am going to leave the country!" he exclaimed, in great emotion. "I only just dropped in to tell you to put off the wedding-guests as well as you can. For there can be no wedding without the bridegroom, and the bridegroom won't put in an appearance."

Geraldine Fitzgerald had up to this time stood silent and motionless, with her hands resting on the back of her chair and her dark eyes fixed steadily on the face of the speaker. Now she addressed him in a tone of quiet authority.

"One thing I think you will tell me, Mr. Rowley: Does Gerald Fitzgerald still live?"

"Yes, he still lives," answered Sallust, sulkily.

"So far, good. Another question I think you will answer me: Is Colonel Fitzgerald in good health?"

"Yes, he is in good health."

"Has he sent by you any message or any note of explanation as to his failure to keep his appointment here?"

"No, ma'am, he has not sent by me any message or any note of explanation as to his failure to keep his appointment here; nor, if he had, would I, under the circumstances, have delivered it. There, I have answered three questions. Now, the rack shall not wring another word from me on that subject!" exclaimed Sallust, grimly.

"It is quite enough. I do not wish to ask you another question," muttered Geraldine between her set teeth and white lips. "Colonel Fitzgerald is alive and well, and yet he comes not to keep his engagement on his wedding-day and sends no explanation of his conduct!"

And with these words she sallied out of the room.

"There, you little villain, see what you have done!" exclaimed Patricia, in a fury.

"Upon my soul, I didn't do anything!" pleaded Sallust.

"You have said too little or too much."

"I didn't mean to say anything, but she compelled me."

"Better you had kept silence than have said what you did."

"I know it, and I wanted to keep silence, but she would not let me."

"Then, since you were forced to speak, it would have been better that you had told the worst, whatever that worst may be, than to leave such vague horrors to be inferred," said Patricia, sternly.

"Ay, that 's because you don't know anything about it. But, I say! *I* must be off—"

"Stop! You told our cousin that Colonel Fitzgerald is alive and well, and yet sends no note or message explanatory of his strange conduct. Now answer me this question, which I think could never have occurred to Geraldine, or she would have asked it: *Is Colonel Fitzgerald at liberty?*"

"I shall answer no more questions. Good-bye, Pat. I 'm sorry to leave you, but the best of friends must part," said the young man, rising and taking his hat.

"Stop! You shall not go until you have seen my uncle and given *him* some explanation, if you will not give it to any one else!" cried Patricia, flying to the bell.

"What is the use of your doing that? There is not a servant in the house out of bed at this time of the morning," said Sallust, drawing on his gloves.

"True! True! I will go to uncle's room myself!" exclaimed Patricia, flying out of the parlor and up the stairs.

But before she knocked at her uncle's door, she remembered that she must not alarm him; so she moderated her haste and knocked softly.

"Who is that?" inquired the voice of Mr. Fitzgerald from within.

"It is I, uncle—Pat."

"What do you want, my dear?"

"Only to tell you that Sallust has arrived and that there is some little delay in the coming of Cousin Gerald."

"Delay in the coming of Gerald! Is he ill?" demanded Mr. Fitzgerald.

"Oh, no! He is quite well, I assure you. But something has occurred to delay his arrival."

"*What* has occurred? Can't you speak, Patricia?"

"I do not know, uncle. Sallust refuses to explain to me or to Geraldine, but perhaps he will to you."

"Will Gerald be here this evening, then, in time for the wedding?"

"I do not know, sir. Sallust can explain. Shall I send him to you?"

"Yes. Tell him to come up at once. All this is very strange and disagreeable!" exclaimed Mr. Fitzgerald, moving as if he were about to rise from his bed.

Patricia flew down-stairs to intercept the departure of the visitor. She rushed out into the hall and tore open the front-door, only in time to hear the ringing hoofs of the rider's horse, as he galloped furiously away by the bridle-path that led down the mountain-side to the turnpike road.

"What *can* be the matter?" she asked herself, as she retreated into the house. "What *can* have happened to Gerald Fitzgerald to keep him from his appointment with his promised bride upon her wedding-day? If he were dead or if he were ill, one could understand it; but he is alive and well, and his conduct is quite incomprehensible. It is a great mystery; and it is said that where there is mystery there is always guilt. But guilt in connection with Gerald Fitzgerald's name? Impossible!"

As Patricia re-entered the drawing-room she found a sleepy servant, apparently just risen and engaged in opening the shutters.

"Did you see Mr. Sallust Rowley this morning?" she inquired.

"Yes, miss. He left his horse in the stable and borrowed a fresh one—Flash-o'-Lightning—and he says, with his compliments, as he will leave it at the Wildeville stables to be sent back here, and we can keep his horse until called for," replied the man.

"That is cool, upon my word and honor! I wonder if he thinks they keep a livery stable here!" muttered Pat to herself.

At this moment Mr. Fitzgerald's old body-servant entered the room, saying, respectfully:

"Please, miss, old marster say how he is waiting for Mr. Sallust."

"Tell your master that Mr. Sallust has left the house. Or—stay! Is Mr. Fitzgerald up and dressed?"

"Yes, miss. I jes' done put him in his easy-chair."

"Then I will go to him myself. Go on and tell him so," said Patricia.

The servant bowed and led the way to the chamber of his master.

Patricia found her uncle seated in his easy-chair by the front window, with his gouty foot upon its rest.

"Oh, is it you, my dear? Where is Sallust?" said the old gentleman, putting out his hand and drawing a chair near his own and pointing for Patricia to take it.

The young girl sat down and answered cautiously:

"Sallust has gone, uncle. He had already gone when I returned to the drawing-room."

"But, this is very strange," said the old gentleman, in a displeased tone; and then he commenced and questioned Patricia closely as to all that had passed in her interview with the mysterious visitor.

Patricia acted with all the tact and discretion of which she was mistress, and found to her great relief that the invalid was not nearly so much upset by the news, or the lack of news, as she had expected to find him.

"It is all very strange; but, of course, Gerald is in the right. It is probably some other man's interest or honor that is somehow involved, and Gerald cannot explain without some breach of trust. I hope Gerald will be able to reach here this evening before the hour appointed for the wedding ceremony. But however that may be, or whatever the mystery may be, my confidence in my son's honor is immovable," exclaimed the old man.

"So is mine, uncle," added Patricia, earnestly.

"I thank you, my dear. But what does Geraldine say?" he anxiously inquired.

"She says very little, uncle," Patricia cautiously replied.

"I fear that she is vexed."

"She did not say so."

"Oh, no, she would never say so! She would die first! Ah, well, it will all be right when Gerald comes this evening! If he does not know how to soothe a sulky sweetheart he is no true Fitzgerald! There, my dear, you need not wait. Tell them to send me up my cup of chocolate."

So dismissed, Patricia left the room and went down-stairs, and gave her uncle's order to the housekeeper.

She now found all the rooms open and the rays of the rising sun streaming into all the east windows that faced the river, and lighted up the house.

She passed out of the front-door and went down upon the terrace overhanging the river, to walk there for a while, to rid herself, if possible, of the anxious and gloomy thoughts inspired by the strange demeanor of her cousin, Sallust Rowley.

The summer morning succeeding the storm was splendid beyond description. The scenery was magnificent. The sun was just sparkling up from behind the Eagle-Roost Ridge, and irradiating all the wooded hills, mountains, brooks and river into a dazzling conflagration of morning glory.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PURSUERS.

While she was gazing in breathless awe and admiration upon this scene, the sound of horses' hoofs struck upon her ear.

She turned in the direction of the sound, half expecting to see Sallust Rowley come riding back.

She did not see him, but she saw four strange men gallop up to the house and dismount.

Grooms, that were always in attendance to wait on visitors, came up and took their horses. The men walked up the terrace

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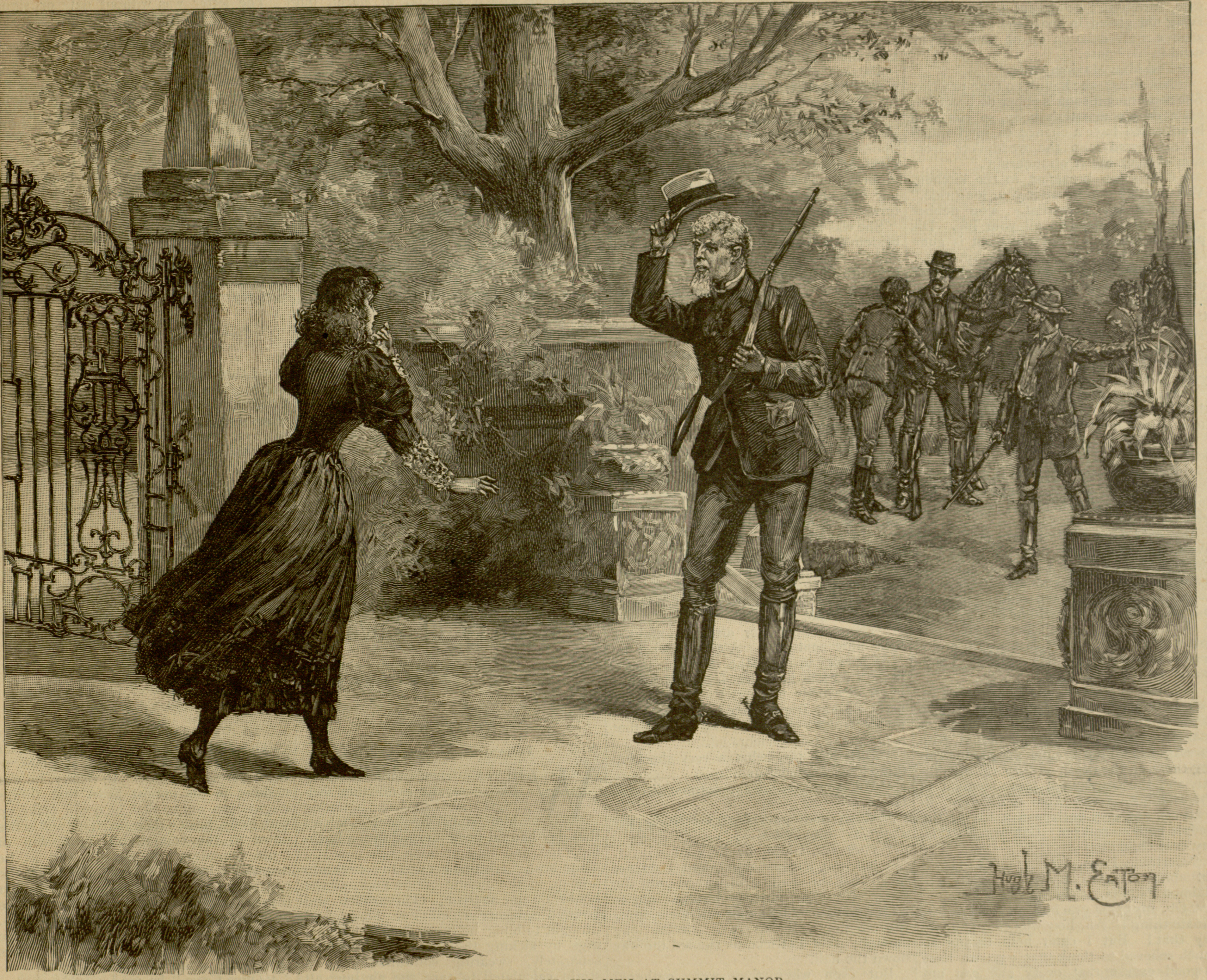

THE SHERIFF AND HIS MEN AT SUMMIT MANOR.

steps. They stood upon the terrace for a moment, looking about them, and then the oldest man, who seemed to be the leader, came up to Patricia, bowed and said:

“I beg your pardon, miss, but we wish to see the master of the house.”

Patricia, stricken with terror, and connecting this strange visit with the still stranger conduct of Sallust Rowley, answered:

“I do not think that you can see Mr. Fitzgerald. His health is in a very critical condition. He is confined to his chamber with an attack of gout and is forbidden by the doctor to see any stranger or to have any excitement. Will not I do as well?”

“Scarcely, miss. Is there no other man about the house besides the master. then, that we can see?” inquired the stranger.

“There is no one here, except the master and the man-servants. I am afraid you will have to confide your business to me,” said Patricia, gathering courage.

“Well, miss, it is not a pleasant thing to say to a young lady, but time presses. In fact, we have a warrant here for the arrest of one Sallust Rowley,” said the stranger.

“A warrant! For the arrest of Sallust Rowley!” exclaimed Patricia, in amazement and horror; for to her apprehension a warrant and an arrest were the very consummation of mortal misery and disgrace.

“Do not be alarmed, miss. We do not intend to hurt him. Where shall we find the young man?” inquired the officer.

“I do not know! He is not here! I do not know where he is; but for Heaven's sake, tell me—what has he done?”

“It is not necessary to go into that, my dear young lady. Tell us where we can find the young man, so that we can make the arrest quietly without causing an unseemly disturbance in a gentleman's house. Come—where is Mr. Sallust Rowley?”

“I do not know—indeed, I do not know! He is not here!” said Patricia, in a panic.

“Come, come, miss. We know that he crossed Haddon's Ferry at midnight last night, and rode here, reaching the house at dawn this morning. We know this for a fact, so that if you do not give him up quietly we shall be obliged to search the premises,” said the officer resolutely.

“Oh, for the love of mercy, do not *think* of searching the house! It would kill my uncle, in his present critical state! And you would not cause the death of an old man, would you?” exclaimed Patricia, wringing her hands in a great trouble.

“Of course not; but it is *you*, my dear young lady, who are endangering your uncle's safety, by refusing to give up the man we want and compelling us to make a disturbance by searching the house. Show us the young man, and we will take him quietly and go about our business.”

“But I do not know where he is. I only know that he is not here,” persisted Patricia, in great distress. “Do you suppose for a moment that I am capable of telling a falsehood, even to shelter him?” demanded Patricia, her face flushing crimson at the implication.

“I beg pardon, miss, but what are we to think?”

“Listen and I will tell you all I know about it. Sallust Rowley *did* arrive here very early this morning. He stayed about half an hour, but seemed during that time to be in great haste to be off again. At the end of that time, he went off, leaving his tired horse here and taking a fresh one. He has been gone nearly an hour. I do not mind giving you this information, because I think it will do him no harm, as he has made good his escape, and it will prevent your disturbing an invalid gentleman by searching the house. If you still doubt me and think that my story needs confirmation, you can go down to the stables and question the coachman and groom.”

The men exchanged a few words apart with each other, and then the elder said:

“We will, at any rate, go to the stable and hear what the people there have to say before we proceed to search the house. If they put us on the right track, we need not return here again to molest you, miss.”

And with these words the officer rode off to the stable, followed by his companions.

“Well,” said Patricia, looking after them, “I would have been worse than a traitor to have given them any information, if it had not been to save uncle from dangerous excitement, and if I had not known that Sallust had got beyond *their* pursuit by this time! But, ah, what *has* that wretched boy been up to? And is it *this* business that Gerald Fitzgerald is mixed up with? I forgot to ask them. I shall not say a single word to uncle about this visit, and I must caution the servants not to do so. Oh, dear me, how glad I am the girls are all sleeping late this morning after their restless night! I hope they won't wake up until noon. And this is the wedding-day! And we have to think of the wedding-guests who will soon be assembling. What on earth can we tell them? Then, uncle feels so sure that Gerald will be here on time, while I know that he will not be. Or even if, by a sort of miracle, he should come, his first groomsman will not be in attendance. What a complication! If only something would happen that everybody could understand, to put off the wedding—an earthquake or a conflagration or a case of small-pox; anything but this mystery with its flavor of guilt. Oh, dear, life is a great bore!” sighed Patricia, as she turned into the house.

Aunt Hetty, the old housekeeper, met her, saying:

“De breakfas' is all ready and sp'ilin', Miss Pat; but none ob de young ladies is down yet. What is to be done?”

“Nothing. Let them rest. They were up nearly all night, Het. They were frightened by the storm and they would not go to bed. Has uncle had his breakfast?”

“La, yes, honey, long ago; all de breakfas' he ebber takes—his cup o' chocolate and bit o' dry toast.”

“Well, then, you may just bring me a cup of coffee here and put the breakfast back until the young ladies rise,” said Patricia, throwing herself into an easy-chair.

“Berry well, honey; jes' as you say,” answered the old woman, retreating.

“Stay, Het. Has any message come from Miss Maxima Rowley to-day? Any news of General Slaughter's condition?”

“No, honey, not since last night, when word come as he was much wuss, an' Miss Maxima couldn't leave him.”

“Yes, I know; that will do, Het. You need not wait.”

“Yes, honey; I bring your cup o' coffee immediate,” said the woman, finally retreating.

She soon reappeared with a slight breakfast arranged on a waiter, which she placed upon a stand near the young lady.

Pat, who thought she could take nothing but a cup of coffee, managed to dispose also of a couple of rolls, a fried perch and an egg.

Then Het removed the waiter, and Patricia began to walk uneasily up and down the floor until she was startled by the sound of horse's hoofs galloping past.

She ran to the window and looked out and saw the sheriff's officers riding away.

“Let them go. They will never catch my Sally now! But, oh, what *has* the unlucky chap been up to, to have the sheriff's officers in pursuit of him?” she groaned, wringing her hands.

The sound of the sheriff's horses' feet had scarcely died away before another horse was heard galloping toward the house.

“Good gracious, what is coming now? One would think this house was the headquarters of a cavalry regiment, or of the flying artillery!” she exclaimed, hurrying to the door and tearing it open.

“What is the matter *now?* What news have *you* brought?” she inquired of the agitated messenger.

“Berry bad news, miss! I 's sorry to say Ole Marse Gen'ral is gone, miss—passed away a little arter midnight.”

“Oh, thank Heaven!” fervently ejaculated Patricia.

“Miss!” exclaimed the messenger, looking aghast.

“Oh, I didn't mean that—of course, I didn't! Of course, I am *very* sorry for the poor old gentleman!' amended Patricia, gravely.

“She 's 'fused in her min' along of de grief. I oughtn't to 'a' broke' it to her so suddint,” said the messenger, musingly.

“But it will *put off the wedding*, won't it?” exclaimed Patricia.

“In course it *must*, miss; which was de berry reason why Miss Maxima sent me off in sich hot haste to tell you; 'caze, she says, it wouldn't be decent to have marrying nor giving in marriage goin' on wid such a near delation ob de family layin' dead in his house."

"Did Miss Maxima write?"

"No, miss; she hadn't no time to write. She send me off soon 's ebber de breaf was out'n de ole marster's body, so you dem here would have a chance to send round de news and stop the weddin'ers from comin' to de house ob mournin'."

"Get some breakfast in the kitchen. You must be hungry after your long ride."

"Dat 's so, Miss Pat. You nebber spoke a truer word in all your life. Dis poor ole nigger 's front waistcoat is gone clear to his backbone along of emptiness."

Once more Patricia sought the chamber of her invalid uncle.

"Well, my dear, have you heard anything from Maxima this morning!" inquired the old gentleman.

"Yes, uncle," replied Patricia, availing herself of this favorable opening for her grave news.

"Well, my love, what does she say? Is the general any better? Will she be here in time for the wedding?"

"The wedding will have to be put off, I fear, dear uncle."

"What! Is he so ill as all that?"

"He is gone, uncle. A messenger has just come from Hill Top Hall to bring the news."

"What! Gone, is he? Poor old fellow! Well, this *is* sudden! Yes, old as he is—thirty years older than I am, my dear—it is sudden! Death always seems sudden, I do suppose. As you say, the wedding must be put off. Where is Geraldine?"

"She has not yet left her room. She lost a great deal of rest last night, and is trying to take some this morning, I suppose," said Patricia.

"Then, my dear, in the absence of Gerald and Geraldine, I must ask you to take some orders in this crisis. Send off as many men as our stables can mount, with messages to all our invited guests, informing them of the death of General Slaughter, and the consequent postponement of the wedding. Send them in different directions, and give each man a list of the people he is to call on. Can you do this, my dear child?"

"Certainly I can, my dear uncle! I will set about it immediately!" eagerly exclaimed Patricia, as she hurried away.

"Oh, my good gracious me, what a fortunate thing! Ah, how wicked of me to say that! But I can't help feeling so much relieved to think that *now* we have a good excuse that every one can understand for putting off the wedding that couldn't come on," she said to herself, as she hurried down-stairs, and rang the bell for the housekeeper.

"Young ladies ready for breakfast yet?" inquired Aunt Het, as she came in.

"No; but never mind them now. Have you seen Saturn from Hill Top?"

"Yes, honey, I done seen Satan jes' now," said Aunt Het.

"You have heard his news?"

"Yes, honey. Ole Marse Gen'al Slaughter gone. Well, honey, nothin' but what might 'a' been spected dese twenty years or more. Why, honey, dat ole man is 'siderable ober ninety year ob age! 'Deed, dear knows, ef it had 'a' been *me* lef' so long, I done been afeared as de good Lord had forgot to call me, an' I might keep on libbin' till I dried up and blowed away. Ah, but he *was* a saint on dis yeth! We have sperienced a great loss in him, rest his soul!" sighed Het, wiping her tearless eyes.

"And now you know, Het, that the wedding which was to have been celebrated to-night must be put off," said the more matter-of-fact Patricia.

"Yes! All is wanity and wexation ob de sperrits! Little do us feel like makin' merry wid music and dancin' wid sich a good ole man laying stark dead in his house and gone to glory."

"I want you to send the head groom to me for orders, Het. We shall have to dispatch messengers in every direction to stop the wedding-guests from coming."

"Yes, honey, in course. I go send him right straight up to you," sighed Het, hurrying away from the room.

Patricia walked about the floor while waiting for the messenger to do her errand.

Presently, the door opened, and the old groom entered, bowing respectfully.

"Domitian, we have had grave news this morning. General Slaughter has departed this life," said the young lady.

The old servant bowed solemnly.

"The wedding must be deferred in recognition of this event. Your master desires that you have every horse in the stable saddled, and a man mounted on each to dispatch with the news to our friends to prevent their coming here this evening. As the men mount let them ride up to the house one by one to take further orders from me. Hasten, Domitian, and do your errand."

The old man bowed even more solemnly than before and left the room.

Patricia passed into her uncle's study, seated herself at his desk and wrote out a list of names for each messenger's route.

When she had completed her task, she gathered up the slips of paper and went out upon the front terrace to give them to her messengers. She found about a dozen mounted men awaiting her orders. Having dispatched all her couriers she returned to the house.

She was met in the hall by all the young bridemaids, who had come down in a body and now gathered around her and greeted her with girlish delight.

"Oh, isn't it a glorious morning after the storm!" exclaimed Horatia Rowley, the pretty, little, red-headed sister of Sallust.

"A perfectly lovely day for a wedding," chimed in May Faire, the golden-haired orphan schoolmate of Geraldine Fitzgerald.

"Blessed is the bride that the sun shines on," quoted the dark-eyed Anna Condé, the special friend of Horatia.

"Yes, yes! You are all right. Only, there will be no wedding and no bride!" exclaimed Patricia.

The news fell like a thunder-bolt in the mist of a clear sky.

"No wedding and no bride?" exclaimed Horatia.

"What on earth has happened?" cried May Faire.

"Is General Slaughter much worse?" asked Horatia.

"General Slaughter died last night, a little after midnight. A messenger from Miss Rowley brought the news this morning. Couriers have just been dispatched in all directions to carry the news to our many distant friends, and save them the useless trouble of coming to a wedding that is not going to be celebrated."

"Oh, dear me, what a very shocking thing!" exclaimed Anna.

"What a terrible disappointment!" cried Horatia.

"What does poor dear Geraldine say about it?" inquired May.

"Poor dear Geraldine don't know it yet. She has not left her room, and I do not mean that she shall be disturbed until she does. And now, girls, we have nothing to do but to eat our breakfast with what appetite we may. It has been waiting long enough," said Patricia, as she led the way down the hall.

But even when they were gathered around the table, where a tempting morning meal had been laid, the young people could not eat or drink for chattering.

"And to think that Colonel Fitzgerald and his groomsmen will arrive here to-day ignorant of all that has happened! Oh, won't it be a heavy blow to a bridegroom?" cried May Faire.

"Horrible!" chimed in Horatia and Anna.

In the midst of their chattering the door quietly swung open and Geraldine Fitzgerald entered the room. She was clothed entirely in white from head to foot. There was not a speck of color about her morning dress. Her face was deadly pale, and in contrast to the raven blackness of her hair it seemed as white as her dress.

She bowed in silence to her young friends, advanced quietly and took her place at the table.

Her presence fell like a damper upon the flow of girlish talk.

"You have heard what has happened, Geraldine," said Patricia.

"Yes, I have heard what has happened. Desiré told me when she came to dress me. Give me some strong coffee, Patricia," said Geraldine, with stolid calmness.

The young girl handed the cup of coffee in silence. She knew well that it was not the death of General Slaughter nor yet the postponement of her wedding that had stricken all the color from Geraldine's face; but the mysterious absence and still more mysterious silence of her destined bridegroom, that had fallen like a death-blow on the beautiful and blooming bride-elect.

As soon as the uncomfortable breakfast was over, carriages were ordered, and the young bridemaids took a reluctant leave.

Patricia was left alone in the morning sitting-room with her cousin.

"Tell me now frankly, Geraldine: Would you prefer that I, too, should go or that I should stay here with you?"

"You must go, Patricia, and I shall go with you. I will not pass another night or day under the roof of Colonel Fitzgerald," said the young lady, resolutely.

"Geraldine! Oh, don't talk in that way, my dear! Wait and see. Gerald may come this very day and answer for himself," exclaimed Patricia, in alarm, but still trying to hope against hope.

"Or he may not come. I will not wait his lordly pleasure," grimly replied the young lady.

"He may still write and explain, dear Geraldine. Wait until the boy comes from the post-office, to see whether there is a letter for you," pleaded Patricia.

"I tell you I *will not* wait the arrogant pleasure of Colonel Fitzgerald!" exclaimed Geraldine, haughtily. "I have ordered the carriage, and we shall leave this place within an hour."

"Thank Heaven, here comes Bob from the post-office!" exclaimed Patricia, starting up and flying out to seize the mail-bag.

She flew back again into the parlor, opening the bag with trembling fingers.

Geraldine looked on with a haughty glance and "lips that scarce their scorn forbore."

"There! I told you so. A letter from Colonel Fitzgerald for you! It is the only one in the bag, too! Take it and repent your haste!" exclaimed Patricia, throwing a thin envelope into her cousin's lap.

Geraldine commanded herself as only a proud woman could have done. She did not snatch the letter; she took it up slowly, opened it deliberately and read—first to herself and then aloud—to Patricia.

The letter was without date or signature. It contained but two lines:

"Geraldine, trust me in this day as I should trust you all days!"

"I *will not* trust him, since he does not confide in me!" indignantly exclaimed Geraldine, throwing the note from her. "I have trusted him too long and too fatally! I suffered myself to be brought here to his house as a bond-maid to her master! And my humility has been repaid with treachery and contempt. I shall leave this house to-day. I shall go with you, Patricia, to the home of your worthy uncle, my other good guardian! I thank Heaven I have that other guardian for a refuge in this time of trouble! Royal Greenleaf does not make the boast of this race that never

'Has falsehood or disgrace
Been seen to soil Fitzgerald's plume,
Or mantle in his face!'

But I think I may quite as safely trust his honor. I will stay at Greenwood until Christmas, when I shall come of age. Then I will take up my abode at one of my own manors. But never again will I enter the house of the traitor, Gerald Fitzgerald!"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 48.]

THE SPANISH TREASURE.[*]

A Story of Love and the Love of Gold.

BY ISABELLA CASTELAR.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A PLEASING ALTERNATIVE.

WHEN Clarence Stanley reached his room, the conflicting feelings that had been agitating him since he met Dolores that day had all been merged into a burning rage, and that emotion was now at a white heat. His first act was to collect into a heap, in the middle of the floor, all the books on mesmerism, clairvoyance and kindred subjects which Van Tassel had brought to him; he then relieved his feelings by kicking the lot, collectively and separately, swearing continuously in a strain calculated to turn the air blue all around him.

"Infernal rubbish!" he finally wound up, with a feeling of positive refreshment at this relief to his pent-up fury, mortification and disappointment. "A pretty muddle I have made of the whole affair—putting my foot in it is nowhere! I have jumped into the bog up to my waist, and every step I might make I would only flounder deeper. That idiot Van—he said I would burn my fingers, and I 've done it! Playing with fire, indeed! I 've made a regular bonfire, and I 'm scorched to the eyebrows! I 've lost Polly and her millions—the one certain prize in the lottery. If Celestine gets another square look at me, it 's all up with the Honorable Clarence, and I may have to run for my life; and as to the Mendoza treasure and the heiress, that is farther off than ever. But what is the mystery about that girl? Is she a witch? Did she magnetize me, or is Van right, and has she really some angelic protection beyond my power to control or understand? Rubbish! The whole thing is nonsense, even to my power over the simple fool. He fears me and believes my will all-powerful, because drink and opium have destroyed his own. Well, there, at least, I am safe, and I will use him for my advantage. For the rest, I must look things squarely in the face and make a new deal."

And, as if to facilitate this, a letter was at this moment handed in at the door, and the waiter delivered it with the words that it had been brought "by messenger, with orders to put it directly into Mr. Stanley's hands."

"A woman's message, of course," thought Stanley, with a slight feeling of perturbation; for he felt that in the eyes of the Hamilton family he was covered with the most shameful contempt, and might even expect to be called to very sharp account by Mary's father. "From Polly, I suppose. I can never see the girl again—no, not even if she were willing to forgive everything. A girl who *could* forgive that scene to-day would be insupportable. Not all old Hamilton's millions could redeem her, though I am fond of gold."

This Stanley said to himself, with that curious desire to whitewash his character in his own eyes, that comes, at times, to the worst sort of men. In reality, he was wishing in his inmost heart that things might turn out so that he could make up with Polly, hasten their marriage and settle down to the comfortable possession of "old Hamilton's millions;" and as he turned the letter about and glanced at the address on it, he was conscious of a distinct throb of disappointment at seeing that the handwriting was wholly unknown to him. He tore it open at once and glanced at the signature, and his disappointment was changed to amazement and curiosity.

"Olive Gaye," he read. "Now, what on earth can that girl have to say to me? She is a deep one, and it was she who brought Celestine to call on Polly Hamilton. What new complication is waiting for me?"

"DEAR MR. STANLEY"—wrote Miss Gaye—"I am sure you will pardon the liberty I take in addressing you when I explain the reason. I cannot feel, anyway, that we are strangers, having known your dear papa and the rest of the family so well, and being also aware of the unfortunate misunderstanding between you and your relatives. But for that, dear Mr. Stanley, I should not be in a position to offer you the important news now in my possession, for you would have known it first. As it is, both you and the newspaper-reading public at large will be in possession of it—perhaps to-morrow morning; and that is why I wish to say *that it is absolutely necessary for your future happiness and comfort that you should see me first.* I shall remain at home all day, and I have given orders that no one shall interrupt the confidential conversation which I am now ready to have with you. Do not, I beg of you, keep me waiting one minute longer than is absolutely necessary. It will be very impolite in you and very unflattering to me, but, above all, it will be disastrous to your future."

This remarkable effusion then ended by the writer subscribing herself:

"Dear Mr. Stanley's sincere and constant friend,
OLIVE GAYE."

"Now, what in the devil's name does she mean, or what does she want?" exclaimed Stanley. "There is a menace in this which I can partly guess at, remembering that she is, by this time, deep in Celestine's confidence. But what is this particular information in regard to my family? Well, I suppose the easiest way to answer that is not to keep her waiting; for I may need all the information I can pick up in regard to my English family."

He read the letter carefully a second time, in order to impress it upon his memory, and then, having torn it into fragments, he was presently on his way to call on Olive Gaye.

"So good of you to come at once," said Miss Gaye. "I felt sure it would shock you less to hear of your bereavement from an old friend of the family than to have it come on you with the abruptness of mere telegraphic news from England, particularly as you did not even know of their ill-

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ness. Poor Lord Frederick! There has long been no hope, nor for the dear child, either; but the boy died first, and within an hour the father. My news comes in the form of a cable dispatch, and, therefore, I have no particulars; but without doubt Lord Frederick's death was accelerated by the death of his heir and only child."

A slight exclamation escaped the lips of the Hon. Clarence Stanley, but he instantly repressed all signs of emotion and, slowly sinking into the chair indicated by his hostess when he first entered the room, he said:

"Do you mean, Miss Gaye, that my brother and his little son are both dead?"

"Lord Frederick Stanley and his son are dead," returned Olive, with special emphasis.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Clarence. "I am shocked, truly, but I shall not pretend to any great grief. We have been long parted, you know, Miss Gaye."

"Oh, yes, indeed!" assented Olive.

"And since you know the affairs of my family so well, of course you know that I was never in sympathy with them, nor they with me."

"I quite understand that," said Olive.

"May I inquire from whom you have received your information, Miss Gaye?"

"The dispatch is from dear old Toddlekins, Mr. Stanley," replied Olive, with a wicked smile. "Dear old Toddlekins whom you have so entirely forgotten. It would quite break her heart to know this, for she simply adored Clarence Stanley. It was she who showed me the picture I told you of, you know, and the old darling has actually lent it to me." She turned to an album on the table and took from it a photograph which was lying loose within the leaves. "I find it is not nearly so good a likeness of you as I thought; indeed, if you will pardon the compliment, it doesn't do you justice. You are very much handsomer; but I'm afraid you are a sad deceiver, Mr. Stanley. See, now, here is written by the beloved hand of that Clarence whom she adored: 'to his dearly loved friend, Milicent Fairfax,' and you cruelly declared that you didn't remember her—indeed your manner implied that you were unconscious of her existence."

She held the picture close to her face for a moment, then her keen, bright, penetrating eyes looked over the top of it at the face of her companion that was now very pale, but set and defiant, and she only liked him the better for that look, as she thought:

"Yes, he will fight, and with me to back him we shall win, for we shall both fight."

"It is a long time ago, Miss Gaye," he said, seeing that she waited for an answer, "and I have a poor memory, sometimes."

"Yes, so I have observed," said Olive, "and yet—poor Celestine! *She* remembers *you* so well; it was too cruel."

Her listener started violently; but he wouldn't yield yet.

"Confound the woman!" he thought. "How much does she know? And is it knowledge or suspicion? What is her game? I must know before I commit myself."

"Celestine?" he repeated. "Really, Miss Gaye, you have the advantage of me."

"Yes, indeed," laughed Olive, "I think I have, Mr. Carlos Mendoza."

The man before her cowered—instinctively his glance wavered, and he looked about as if for some means of escape; but the next moment he "pulled himself together"—Olive saw and admired the mental effort—and then he said, in cold incisive tones:

"Perhaps it would be better if we understood each other, without any further fencing, Miss Gaye; and if we are going to row in the same boat let us pull in the same direction."

Olive gave a laugh, full of delighted appreciation.

"You are a man after my own heart, Carlos," she said, "and like enough to get it, too."

"Ah, thanks, if it is as good as your head, Miss Olive, it will be a prize for any man; but let me suggest, my dear girl, that acquiring bad habits is easier than getting rid of them. It might be *a very* bad habit to begin by calling me Carlos."

"You are right, dear Clarence—I shall not forget again."

For a few moments they looked each other squarely in the eyes, smiling; then Olive replaced the photograph in the album.

"I shall not need it any more," she said, "I shall return it to Toddlekins—dear old soul! She values it more than her life; but I shall prefer a new one. Next time you call on me, Clarence, bring me a really good and satisfactory photograph of yourself, won't you, dear?"

"The best I can get, and now, dear Olive, tell me, how much do you know?"

"Everything," laughed Olive, "absolutely everything—according to what the scientists call inductive reasoning. As to fact, plain, cold, hard fact—well, enough—quite enough to hang you, but not quite enought to save you. Now I fancy there may be side lights that you can turn on, which will change the more lurid colors into paler lines. According to Celestine, the man who was brought home to her, pierced through as she supposed, with his own dagger, had been foully murdered."

"There was no murder about it, nothing but a hand-to-hand fight, at a time and under circumstances when fights ending fatally were of daily occurrence. It was a fair fight, self-defense on the part of both. Had I not killed him, he would have killed me; and your friend's Clarence was a brave man and fought well; and it was after he was dead that the idea of personating him came to me. The resemblance between us was extraordinary, so much so that I suspected some relationship and that we both belonged to the Mendoza family, even before I found the birthmark on his brow."

"Which was a bright red, however, while on you it is black," interrupted Olive.

"You are correct and also sharp," said Stanley (or Mendoza, if the reader prefers, though he continued to be known only as Clarence Stanley). "Had Celestine been half as clever as you are, she would never have been deceived about the dead man. But I counted on her agitation and excitement, and the plan worked. With the assistance of Van Tassel, the man whom she called her brother, I changed clothes with the dead man, and took possession of his papers, letters, journals, etc., by means of which I have been able ever since to personate him. But among his papers I never found anything about this old maid whom you call Toddlekins—"

"And several other things which I shall be able to tell you," said Olive. "Among others, there is an heir-at-law, a certain Lord Harold Moray, who is now in this country, in search of the Honorable Clarence Stanley, and who, in the event of his decease, is the next heir to the earldom and estates of Windermere."

"The deuce!" exclaimed Stanley. "I never heard of him!"

"So I supposed; nor of his sister Constance, to whom Clarence Stanley was engaged when he left England."

"There was nothing about either of them in any of the letters and papers I found," said her listener, aghast at these revelations.

"I guessed as much from my dear Toddlekins's letters. But it would have been rather awkward had Lord Harold suddenly confronted you either here or in England."

"And it will be so still—deucedly awkward."

"Not so bad as it might have been had you neglected to have this conversation with me. As it is, forewarned is forearmed, and you are quite too clever to be overcome by so small a difficulty as that."

"I am not so sure. A few more such shocks and tumbles as I have had of late will shake my nerves."

"Not a bit of it, with me to steady you," said Olive. "You see, I intend to be the Countess of Windermere; and, although the old earl is madly in love with me and plaguing me to death to marry him, I have taken a fancy to have a young husband. If your nerve fails you now, you lose Polly Hamilton; for Celestine will yet learn the truth. You lose all chance of the Mendoza treasure" (again her listener winced and asked himself: "Is there anything this girl doesn't know?"), "and you lose the estates and title of Earl of Windermere. The alternative is simply—"

She paused and smiled bewitchingly.

"To marry you and gain all that is worth having," said her companion, filling that pause. "Truly a pleasing alternative, and I think I will accept it. But now to arrange a plan of action and prepare for all possible contingencies. What do you know of the Mendoza treasure?"

"Only what I have heard incidentally from remarks dropped by Polly Hamilton, and later from Celestine, that your first knowledge of her was made through the hope of finding out something about its hiding-place."

"In which I was confoundedly taken in; but no matter! I know all about it now, and together you and I will go to California and search for it. You are the cleverest woman I ever met in my life, and I shall end by being as madly in love with you as—ahem—the old earl, my father."

Olive smiled serenely, and began to think the partner of her ambitious plans a most charming person.

"With the Mendoza fortune and the Windermere estates and title," continued the Honorable Clarence, "we can rival the state of any prince and princess."

"Precisely what I have been thinking, my dear Clarence, ever since I received old Toddlekins's message. But there are several lions in the way. First you have to break with Polly Hamilton—"

"That is over and done with," was the prompt reply.

"Then there is the recognition, or lack of recognition, on the part of Lord Moray and his sister. That, I think, you can deal with on the score of long absence; and if the lady is troublesome, it can be set down to jealousy and revenge, because you have broken your engagement and married a brighter and cleverer girl. I don't fear the Morays at all—I can deal with them—also the old earl, as he always hated you and will now add the rage of jealousy to his original hate, when you re-appear in the character of my husband. There will, however, be one pair of eyes that cannot be blinded; there will be no deceiving Toddlekins. But she adores me, and I shall tell her, with my arms about her neck, that you and I are one; that she cannot injure you without injuring me doubly, and that will settle it. Toddlekins will give us no trouble. But, last of all, there is Celestine. That woman adores you, Carlos—I mean, Clarence—and the extraordinary resemblance between these two men is working in her mind like yeast in flour. If a living Clarence can so resemble her dead Carlos, why might not a dead Clarence resemble her living Carlos? Already that is to her the one vital question of her life, and the truth will dawn on her before long."

A ferocious look overspread the smiling face of the man who had been listening with admiration to the unfolding of a mind keener and deeper than his own to scheme and plan. Olive had a momentary spasm of alarm at this glimpse into a dark and cruel nature. But she had now no thought of drawing back. Ambition was her ruling passion, as the love of gold was his; and she only trembled for a moment when he said, fiercely:

"Celestine! She will never stand in my way! I will take care of Celestine!"

"Ah! Then there is nothing more, I think." And Olive rose and held out her hand. "I have kept you a long time, but it will save all future mistakes. Come again in the evening; I want to introduce you to my uncle. It may be useful."

Stanley gallantly raised her hand to his lips, and felt that he was now, at last, on the high-road to success. When the door had closed behind him, Olive ran lightly to her room, seated herself at her writing-desk and scrawled, with her left hand, a brief, anonymous message.

"I don't know what his plan in regard to Celestine may be," she thought. "My good Clarence! He is immensely gifted, but he has a way of just missing success. Now, with my assistance, we will change all that, so that he will hit the bull's-eye every time."

She hastily scrawled an address on the back of her letter:

THE BARON VON HELMHOLTZ,
No. — —nd Street, West,
New York City.

For this letter she summoned no servant, but, going out for a walk, she presently dropped it, with her own small, steady hand, into a pillar-box, and drew a quick breath of relief.

CHAPTER XXV.

A GIRL'S FIRST LOVE.

When Dolores entered Mary Hamilton's room, she found the latter, still tremulous and weak, seated in her favorite chair—a deep, wide bamboo chair, almost as large as a lounge and filled with bright-colored, silk-covered cushions. Dolores had come quickly, feeling that if she paused to think she would never have the courage to seek her at all; and now, with the impetus of that thought still on her, she entered and went swiftly toward her friend, only to stop suddenly and quite overcome at the sight of the white and stricken face before her; for Polly had risen to her feet and had come forward a step or two to meet her.

For quite a half-minute, the two girls stood and looked deep into each other's eyes, Polly pleading, pathetic, submissive, and Dolores suddenly strong and helpful, for she had expected tears and passionate reproaches, such as she knew not how to meet or answer. But what she found was so entirely different, that it helped her in what she had already decided that she must do.

Instinctively, she opened her arms as a mother might have approached a grieved child, and Mary flung herself into that protecting, loving embrace.

"Oh, Lorita!" she said, her arms clinging about the other girl's neck and her head resting on her shoulder. "He loves you! He loves you! How am I to bear it?"

"No, Maruja, he does *not* love me," returned Dolores, with an accent of calm conviction, that had an immediate effect on her listener.

Mary Hamilton had, from the moment of their first meeting, felt such confidence in Dolores that, as she had always declared, her very presence was tranquilizing and gave her a feeling of strength and security, as if her spirit were raised above the ordinary, every-day world. She experienced that effect now, with an indescribable sense of being restored to life and happiness, much as if she had been awakened from a horrible but too real dream. She could not forget the words she had heard, but, surely, she had strangely misunderstood the meaning of them. She sank back again into her chair, but she drew Dolores down beside her, and, with her arm close about her, she said in a questioning voice, but with a manner of perfect faith:

"I heard his words, dear. He said that he loved you, and—oh, Lorita—that he had *never* loved any other woman!"

"I know it, Maruja—but it was idle talk—that man never really loved me—he is not capable of it."

Mary drew away from her a moment, and looked at her, questioningly; and Dolores paused in what she had been saying. She had been tempted to add: "He is incapable of loving any one, and it is profaning the word to speak it with his name," but she felt that this would be useless now; so far, opposition to Clarence Stanley had, as is usual in such cases, only increased Polly Hamilton's passion. With a half-impatient sigh Dolores continued:

"What he imagines to be his love for me is simply a mania to possess the great treasure of the Mendozas—a treasure which does, indeed, belong to me if it is ever found, and which no man or woman can truly possess and keep except through its rightful owner; but I shall never seek it. The man you are unfortunate enough to love, Maruja, sees in me simply the possessor of untold treasures, the charm of which is, perhaps, increased and exaggerated by the romantic family history of which I gave him the details. How I regret that I did so! How I wish I had then understood myself better—as I do now. I hoped the story of the wicked and treacherous Pedro Mendoza might have been a warning to him—"

"Lorita!" interrupted Polly, reproachfully. "You are very bitter against Clarence."

"That cannot be news to you, Maruja; you have known from the first my aversion toward Mr. Stanley."

"But, I thought you had grown to like him better—to do him something more like justice, Rita—indeed I have even thought that you—were falling in love with him, and it has troubled me greatly, and now I will say what has been in my thoughts to say more than once, dear Rita." Dolores would have interrupted her, but Polly placed her fingers on the half-opened lips, while she continued with eager, breathless, loving imperiousness: "No, I have set out to say this thing, Rita, and I must have it off my mind; I would never have courage another time. I have feared that you loved Clarence—it seemed so natural that any woman should love him, and it seemed more than natural that he should love you; for how could any one help loving you, Rita, so beautiful, so noble, and seeing you every day. I was sometimes mad with jealousy, and yet, in the very depths of my heart, Lorita, I love you so well that I would give him to you, rather than you should be unhappy. And that is what I want to say, dear, if you really love Clarence, take him! I give him to you! Only be frank with me! Tell me the truth!"

Dolores at first replied only with a look glowing with grateful affection; but she perceived at once that she must put her feeling regarding Stanley into the plainest words, in order that Polly Hamilton might never again misunderstand it.

"Maruja, darling," she said, "how can I thank you for such a proof of your love? It is far more than risking your precious life to save mine. I can only ask you to forgive the plain words I use in answering you. It is not merely that I do not and never could under any circumstances love Clarence Stanley—that gives no idea of my feeling in the matter—*I loathe him!*"

Mary drew away in the greatest surprise, rather than from offense.

"I cannot understand it," she said, puzzled. "I can comprehend that you might disapprove of Clarence, that you might misunderstand him or feel bitterly toward him; but that you or any one should find him personally disagreeable! He is the handsomest and most pleasing

Continued on page 9.

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FRANCE AND AMERICA.

On September 22, a festival was held in France which is inseparably connected with our history as a nation. It commemorated the centenary of the French Republic. Exactly one hundred years ago, the National Convention held its first session at Paris. This celebration is interesting to Americans because our own Revolution taught Frenchmen their first great object-lesson in liberty and equality. The impulse given to freedom throughout the world vibrated more deeply in their hearts than our forefathers anticipated. When WASHINGTON massed the forces aroused by PATRICK HENRY'S eloquence to support the Declaration of Independence, even his sagacious vision foresaw not the ultimate issues of the conflict with tyranny.

The deep chord that first was struck upon this continent echoed on and on until poor, pitiable, bleeding France, arising and viewing with a resolution born of despair her civic ruin, declared this accursed thing should be no longer. The words, deeds and victories of the American colonists were at once her inspiration and her reproach. The reader of these stirring periods may detect in the proclamations and struggles of Gaul a following of our father's example.

Granted that this later and consequent movement was stained by excesses lurid with bloodshed, abominable for its extravagant orgies of cruelty.

It was so; and WASHINGTON, who had saved his country in war, saved it again in peace by restraining those ardent spirits who would have made common cause with the French.

Yet what were these grim days of that awful "Reign of Terror" but the birth-throes of a nation struggling through tears and pain of suffering into nobler self and being?

Criticise or condemn as we please, it still remains that the *European* date for her modern liberties, rights of the subject and free education is the date of the French Republic; and this dared to overthrow a monarchy hoary with venerated age, because the Yankees had done so. So that it is no mere figure of poetical fancy to speak of "the shot at Lexington which re-echoed round the world." In fact, its thunders have not yet died fitfully away.

They abide, and will so abide for the good of the masses down-trodden and abused by fierce lust for power. Republicanism in France needs sympathy and support from us. We rejoice in its success; we shall be more than sad to see it fail. The stars and stripes and the tricolor have a connected birth; may both continue to wave over united and prosperous races, devoted to the best interests of human government.

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BIRDS AND REPTILES.

Partly because it seemed great fun and partly because the perpetrators considered them a nuisance, mankind has waged such a relentless war against birds, turtles, snakes and like small fry, that many species are almost extinct or, if remaining at all, are only met with occasionally and then of very inferior sorts. The spirit of destruction seems to have roamed about unchecked, and the thoughtless and lawless sacrifice of these painstaking servants of man have been driven away from their natural occupation, and their slayers are all at once becoming aware of their value, and now, when it is too late, repent their rashness in destroying them.

For years past a robin has been a novelty in some sections of the country, and in certain sections the blue jay and the red-headed woodpecker have not been seen in years. Barn swallows are not numerous, and the appearance of a flock which almost filled the air for hours, extending as far as the eye could reach, was, on a recent afternoon, an item of interest to many residents in the vicinity of New York.

Most of the insects that do the greatest amount of harm to vegetation multiply so rapidly, that were it not for birds and vermin, it would be practically impossible to raise garden-stuff at all. Gardeners frequently domesticate a family of toads under some convenient stump or old wall, and find almost immediate relief from the slugs and worms which destroy many of the tender and delicate plants. A substitute for the natural protectors of plants may be found in the common hen and her very young chickens. If the hen is confined in a coop placed in the midst of the garden, the baby chicks will soon learn to hunt for the insects which do the most harm. Every creeping and flying thing attracts their attention, and they pick up thousands of worms, bugs and insect eggs every day. They must be taken from the garden as soon as they are old enough to do any harm. Where a succession of broods is hatched, it is easy to keep one or more of them among the plants, and thus guard against much damage and loss. One hen, with her brood, found a home for several seasons in a melon-patch. The chicks came out about the time the melons came up, and the tiny striped bugs which are the bane of melon-growers had not the least chance for their lives. These little foragers are much less destructive to gardens than many other sorts of fowl.

While it is to a certain extent vexatious and aggravating to have fruit-trees stripped of their products by birds, the producer must remember that insects are tenfold more destructive and that in time they will leave the owner not only destitute of fruit but of trees as well. Among the most harmful pests are the borers which make their nests in the bark of trees. The grub hatches and then begins its work of tunneling. The woodpecker, that tireless guardian of fruit-trees, is ever on the alert, and the fat and toothsome grub is his pet dainty. And his persistent tattoo is the fruit-grower's signal of safety. What though he claims his dessert of a few cherries or berries! Certainly his services are worth his "keep."

Every living creature, except the tramp, has its uses, and the birds, with their industrious habits and their insatiable appetite for worms, are profitable laborers when they are willing to work for their board and their lodging. A place in which they may, unmolested, rear their young, the free run of the orchards and proper courtesy from mankind, will insure the owners of fruit-farms abundant and perfect returns for their investment. If the birds appear to eat too many cherries, plant half a dozen more trees. The time, trouble and cost will in the long run be amply repaid.

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HELPLESS PEOPLE.

Every once in a while, one comes across a person whose sole aim and object in life appears to be best expressed by the remark of a venerable grandmother who declared that there were many people in the world who were good for nothing but to keep bread from moulding. The consumption of the staff of life by such persons is much greater than the careless observer would be willing to believe.

In all communities we find people who are so useless and so helpless that the wonder is that they have purpose and vitality enough to live. They must always be looked after and waited on and bothered with until life to their associates, especially those who are the victims of their peculiarities, becomes almost a burden. It ought to be a criminal offense to bring up children without some clearly defined, well-learned and useful occupation. At some time in their lives these dead weights on society are made to feel that they are a burden, but this, as a rule, is only when age and infirmities have overtaken them.

When to uselessness is added vanity, we have a most deplorable spectacle. Such a state of things is usually accompanied by a degree of obtuseness that makes them almost insensible to criticism, and advice and remonstrance alike fall upon unheeding ears. The world has but little use for drones, and some day in its wisdom it will take up their case and assign them to tasks, on the Scriptural idea that if a man does not work neither shall he eat. Life is altogether too earnest to fritter away in idleness, and parents and guardians who permit children to grow up without desirable occupation or the knowledge of how to care for themselves and their future will some day be held to a strict account for such flagrant neglect of duty.

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PROTECTION FOR HORSES.

Those who have occasion to come and go on ferries leading to and from main thoroughfares cannot but have felt the necessity for some adequate protection for the horses that stand exposed to the blasts in the open drive-way of the ferry-boat. Teams heated and steaming from heavy drawing, valuable horses warm from fast driving, many of them with clipped coats, stand in these open ways, and with every sweep of cold air shrink and shiver in a way which cannot fail to enlist sympathy.

It is strange that some provision has not been made for the protection of this good friend of man. Many a valuable horse has been ruined by exposure on an open ferry-boat. No driver possessing ordinary common-sense would stop a horse heated with exercise on a street-corner, in a strong current of air, for ten or fifteen minutes, to talk even on the most pressing business. To keep the horse in motion under such circumstances is absolutely necessary to its health; but in the face of all this, ferry-boats have never provided anything in the way of protection for teams.

Many a horseman avoids drives that involve such exposure to fine stock.

It would not be difficult to arrange a boat with doors constructed on the general principle of a roll-top desk or the metal blinds used in the windows of large business houses. These could be drawn down at the forward end of the boat. It would not be necessary to close both ends at a time. This plan would afford not only protection from wind but abundant safety in case of a panic among the animals.

Whatever the plan adopted, it is imperatively necessary that something be done. Public opinion is becoming aroused on this subject, and its demands in this as well as in almost all other affairs must be met.

THE VALUE OF JUDICIOUS EXERCISE.

BY N. S. STOWELL.

When we are dull, tired and generally out of sorts, it is not unusual for some enthusiastic and interested friend to advise us to go out and take a brisk walk. The exercise-fiend, with his walk cure, is ever present, and many a time persons who are altogether unfit for such exertion are crowded over a course like a race-horse in training.

While exercise is one of the necessary elements of health, one must use the utmost care that it is not overdone. There are many enthusiasts who go on the theory that if a little of anything is good, a great deal must, as a matter of course, be a great deal better. Therefore, they advocate out-of-door exercise, pedestrianism, walking to and from business, no matter how long the distance may be, provided it is within the city limits.

And urged on by the eloquence and entreaty of these advocates of foot-travel and prompted by their desire to feel better and get back their strength, these victims of a dangerous delusion follow out this plan until their vitality is entirely exhausted, and long before they realize the cause, they find themselves in a condition of hopeless invalidism, and between repinings and pain wonder whatever can be the matter, for they certainly went out every day and took regular exercise, and if fresh air is worth anything, surely they should never be ill.

It seems almost impossible to make many persons believe that exercise means anything besides foot-exertion. That one could get much more beneficial effects by sitting or standing still and moving the arms or moving the body would be to them an unheard-of idea. But while there is, of course, much to be said in favor of pedestrianism as an aid to health, the judicious use of the muscles of other portions of the body than those brought into play by this means is quite as important.

An eminent authority has declared that one may indulge in quite as much activity as a healthy system requires and yet never take a walk of any length, and there are many persons, who from experience and observation are worthy of attention, who maintain that long walks are not only not as important to the health as has been popularly supposed, but that they are positively injurious to very many persons who take them as aids to health.

Young men who have a great amount of brain-work to do are often advised to take long walks or to habitually walk from their residence to office or studies. Experiments by a number of law students, some years ago, were made with a view to test the soundness of this theory.

Those who walked to the office where they studied, a distance of considerably more than a mile, found that upon sitting down in the warm atmosphere of a steam-heated apartment they became dull and sleepy, and were often obliged to leave their books for a time or fall into a doze. Those who walked two blocks to the street-cars and one block from cars to office did not feel the sense of oppression that their fellows complained of but were in admirable working condition and far outstripped the others in mental grasp and retentiveness of memory. So marked was the difference in their progress that those who walked were advised to give up at least a part of their walk, which they did to their decided advantage, substituting for it fifteen minutes' exercise in swinging the arms, breathing deeply to fill the lungs, standing erect and throwing the shoulders back and describing various arcs and circles with the body and head.

Mere walking never made a fine figure. This is best secured by standing for a few moments at a time with the back to a perpendicular wall, filling the lungs meanwhile and pressing the shoulder-blades closer to the back. Constant alertness on this subject and even and careful action of all of the muscles will best secure good health and a symmetrical figure.

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[From the Boston Herald.]

"WE PARTED AT THE ALTAR."

Nothing is too sensational for Miss Laura Jean Libbey to write about, and yet her novels do not impress one with an overpowering weight of frivolity. She endeavors to portray her characters and their trying experiences in a vivid way, and to thereby intensify events of life that are not beyond the limits of possibility and still are not of common occurrence. Her story is intense and exciting, and reads smoothly and easily. ["We Parted at the Altar." By Laura Jean Libbey. New York: Robert Bonner's Sons; 16mo.]

THE SPANISH TREASURE.

Continued from page 7.

man I ever knew. Tell me, dear, are you quite sure you don't mistake your own feelings? Is not such intense and bitter dislike a form of love in disguise?"

Dolores laughed outright—the merriest sound that Polly had heard for a long time—and then she said:

"It is well disguised, my dear, and I shall never be able to recognize it for anything but the most unmitigated dislike. Besides that, Maruja, I will confess to you what I have hardly dared admit to myself. I love—how shall I say it?—I love one, whom to look on only once—for I have seen him but for a fleeting moment—is to adore in an instant and forever."

"Oh, Rita, how delightful! Who is he?"

"Also, I do not know; I may never see him again; I may never so much as hear his name, but I shall love him forever, and something in my deepest thoughts tells me that he loves me."

"Ah, now I am satisfied, Rita. *Now* I can understand that you cannot love Clarence. But if he loves you, Rita?"

"Trust me, dear. He does not—he never will—and when he no longer sees me, there will not be even the shadow of such a fancy to mar your happiness."

She would have said more, but she saw that any further conversation would lead to more than she now wished to say; and, rising hastily, she kissed Mary hurriedly, but with passionate tenderness. Then she hastened from the room. But, before closing the door, she came back and took Polly Hamilton once more in her arms; and the girl remembered afterward that she embraced her solemnly.

"Adieu, Maruja!" she said. "My one dear, true friend. Love me always, Maruja, and never forget me! Dear girl!"

She drew her passionately to her heart, and Polly felt a strange sadness in that embrace, as if her friend were saying a long farewell instead of going to her room.

Scarcely had Dolores gone, when Mrs. Hamilton sought her daughter; and if Polly had not been sunk in thought she would have seen at a glance that her mother was in a state of suppressed excitement, of a different nature from the painful anxiety which had been distressing her in regard to Polly's mysterious illness.

Now that her child had recovered from that dreadful swoon, and had been declared in no danger from any unknown illness, Mrs. Hamilton had grown comparatively calm; and by the time her husband had returned from his customary business duties, her tranquillity had so far come back that she decided to say nothing about the illness that had so alarmed her. After all, perhaps, it had been some girlish quarrel, and when she had talked it over with Dolores she would certainly feel better. Girls must be girls, and if it was a lovers' quarrel, of course, Polly would tell her all about it some time. Meanwhile, she had picked up an evening paper which Mr. Hamilton had thrown on the table, and she mechanically glanced at it while counting the minutes till Dolores should leave Mary's room. Suddenly the paper rustled violently in Mrs. Hamilton's hand, and she read over and over again a certain paragraph which had caught her eye.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 48.]

THE KING OF HONEY ISLAND.*

A Historical Romance of the Creole Coast.

BY MAURICE THOMPSON,

Author of "Mordbank," "The Fighting at Point Rose," "A Tallahassee Girl," "His Second Campaign," "Hoosier Mosaics," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXV—*(Continued).*

PRISONERS.

WHEN Loring's companion ran in with the cry, "We are surrounded! The British are all around the place!" the ladies were dumfounded. They stood like white-faced statues.

Loring did not appear to find anything startling in the situation.

"Do not be alarmed," he said, shrugging his shoulders and again touching Pauline's hair with a half-playful yet perfectly respectful expression of regard. "I shall not be long settling with my friends. Excuse me for a few moments."

He walked boldly out through the front door, followed by his man. As he passed close to Mrs. Vernon, he stooped toward her and said, with a ring of impatience in his voice:

"Your husband must have been quite out of his senses when he sent you ladies out here. But be calm. You shall not be ill-treated."

There was a stir out-of-doors—a sound of voices. Some low commands were given. Mrs. Vernon and Mademoiselle de Sezannes became hysterical, but Pauline, though pale as a ghost, seemed to have found ample strength to bear whatever was to come. She thought she heard her father's voice at the door. It was Loring speaking with the British officer. The two entered a moment later.

"They must be taken to some place where they can be protected," Loring was saying.

"Certainly, if it can be done," the officer replied. "But we are in no condition to take care of ladies."

"Send them to New Orleans."

"No, sir. That is against positive orders. We are to permit no white person to go from us to the enemy. No; we must take them. If you are what you claim to be, the general will receive you kindly and give the ladies the best comforts that he can command. That is all that I can say."

"I advise you to treat me with respect, sir," said Loring, very calmly, and fixing his eyes with a malignant stare on those of the officer. "You will know more of me."

"Do as I command you!" exclaimed the sturdy Englishman. "I'm not to be bullied by a prisoner! Bundle up these women and put them on your horses. You will walk. There's no time for talk. Move along!"

Loring compressed his lips, but said not another word. He saw that for once he had found a check to his arrogance. He explained to the ladies that all were prisoners and that they would have to go to the British commander's headquarters."

"I commend you to the good-will of Lieutenant Barnaby," he said, bowing with perfect ease toward the officer. "He feels as big as a drum-major at present."

"Silence, sir, or I'll have you gagged in an instant!" exclaimed the lieutenant.

"You could not gag a hen!" sneered Loring.

The lieutenant whipped out his sword; his face was ablaze with choler.

The ladies began to shriek. Pauline sprang between the men. Loring put her gently but forcibly aside; then lifted the lapel of his coat and leaned forward.

"Put your sword-point through that!" he exclaimed, laying his finger on a shining badge that covered his heart. "Thrust away, young man! Thrust away!"

The face of the officer paled as suddenly as it had reddened. He stood as if faltering for a moment, and then saluted.

Loring responded with lofty indifference, and turning to Mrs. Vernon bade her make haste to go with her captors.

"I will protect you all," he said, turning to Mademoiselle de Sezannes. "You will be safer with the army than in New Orleans." After a moment he turned to the lieutenant and said:

"Hurry things up, let us be off."

It was a curious change; the prisoner seemed to be in command.

"You will ride my horse," he said to Pauline, taking her gently by the arm, "and I am going to walk along beside you. Wrap yourself up well, for it is chilly out in this night fog."

CHAPTER XXVI.

ACROSS THE BATTLE-FIELD.

After the great battle was over, Lieutenant Ballanche was sent by General Jackson to confer with the British officers regarding the burial of the dead lying so thickly tumbled together on that bloody plain. In the course of the interview he did not fail to make inquiries concerning the captive ladies and, when he was told that they were in a small country house not far from the battle-field, he felt his heart leap. He had to smother impatience, however, and go on with his military duties just as though love were a matter of subordinate importance, and as if the burial of a few hundred invaders were of higher obligation than rescuing a beautiful and adorable sweetheart from a situation of suffering and danger. A young man must be under good discipline to be thus wedded to military duty; but it may be remembered that Andrew Jackson had a way of making every one about him regard orders as absolutely binding beyond even life itself.

What set the terrible sting of doubt in the lieutenant's heart and made him chafe through every moment of that seemingly interminable conference, was the fact that none of the British officers could tell him whether or not the captives were still safe from harm. All that they could say was to the effect that the ladies had been kindly treated and safely guarded up to the time of the battle. Since then no one had seen them or heard of them. And what might have happened during that wild rush of overthrow, when the whole British army was torn and scattered, and when the exasperated soldiers were left to shift for themselves without officers to restrain them? The thought was one to chill the young man's blood; but he went on with the conference, his agitation showing only in a certain austerity of manner which the British officers attributed to native churlishness. When at last he had finished the matter, he hastened to General Jackson with his report.

Mr. Vernon was present when he arrived at headquarters and had already asked leave to go in search of his family. The old man's face lighted up wonderfully when Ballanche told what he knew.

"And they are safe!" he exclaimed, showing more passionate excitement than any one had ever witnessed in him before. "They told you that they were safe?" A singularly beseeching note rang through his words.

The lieutenant could not have the heart to tell him that there was a doubt.

General Jackson would not permit any precipitate action. He reminded Mr. Vernon that a truce was pending and that due formalities must be observed in the matter of penetrating the British lines for any purpose. The old man bore the delay in the spirit of a caged lion. It seemed to him that a year might have elapsed since he parted from his wife and daughter; every moment now dragged by like a snail.

What added a peculiar dread to the situation was the thought of Loring, Vasseur and old man Burns all going in the direction which might lead them to where Mrs. Vernon and Pauline had been left by their captors. Mr. Vernon's whole mind dwelt on the fear that his wife and daughter might be told the secret of his past life. His imagination, which was as vigorous and lawless as his frame was stalwart, built up all manner of dark prophecies and filled him with forebodings too dreadful for any thought to give them definite form. He accused himself with all the bitterness of which self-accusation is possible. Why had he not left his loved ones at home where they would have been so safe now? What demon had possessed him to send them (of all places in the world) to that plantation house right in the path of the British army?

When at last, after hours of delay, all necessary formalities had been observed and everything was ready, General Jackson ordered six men detailed to accompany Mr. Vernon and Lieutenant Ballanche on their journey of love.

Old Enos Peevy was one of the squad. A young British officer joined them to see them safe to their destination. They were all mounted; but three of the horses were to bear the ladies back to the American lines.

A rough bridge had been hastily cast across the ditch of death, and over this Mr. Vernon led the way passing into the awful swaths of war's reaping. Peevy rode beside him, sitting awkwardly but firmly on a little creole pony, his long, bony legs reaching down so far that his feet almost touched the blood-tinged ground. He was very much interested in noting the condition of the dead British as he passed along.

"Thar's a feller 'at I plumpted a hole through," he exclaimed presently with great satisfaction, pointing toward a stalwart Highlander outstretched on his back. "I put it to 'im jes' ez 'e war—"

"Hush, man!" said Mr. Vernon in an undertone, "remember that we have an English officer with us."

"Oh, tarnation take the officer! W'at air I er keerin' fer 'im?" grumbled the scout. "I wush 'at I'd er got a bead onter him. Ef I hed it 'd er ben good-bye 'at Mary Ann 'd er said to 'im."

If the English officer heard what was said he discreetly kept silent.

As they rode along, picking their way between the heaps of slain, their horses stumbling over the ruts made by cannonballs, Lieutenant Ballanche looked back toward the low breastworks behind which he had fought, and it required but a glance to comprehend the fatal mistake made by the British. The deadly ditch looked harmless enough from this side—a man would think he could jump across it.

Mr. Vernon could not bear a moderate pace. As soon as they were well beyond the first windrow of the battle he urged his horse to a canter, then into a gallop. Ballanche spurred forward and joined him. A mighty impatience was burning the blood of the two men.

"How far is it yet!" Mr. Vernon huskily demanded, after they had gone beyond the battle-field proper and passed through a stretch of wet, plashy woods.

"Just yonder around the point of magnolias," was the almost breathless answer. "The house is behind those trees."

The old man leaned forward in his saddle and put his horse to its best.

"I fear that we shall run into trouble at this rate," said the English officer who had chanced to come side by side with Enos Peevy.

"Ef we do," said the scout, with a grim leer, "I'll pop you the fust one. Mary Ann yer, w'at I hev in my han', kinder wants ter mek yer 'quaintance anyhow."

The conversation ended at once. The Englishman bit his lip and drew in his horse so as to fall behind. Soon enough he was out of sight, and the Americans saw him no more. He was tired of the ride.

Mr. Vernon and Lieutenant Ballanche were too much absorbed in the thought of reaching the magnolia point and coming within view of the house to note the absence of the officer until Peevy called to them:

"Thet air feller hev snoke off," he cried, in his shrill treble. "That etarnal orficer air gone!"

They slacked their pace to let him come up with them.

"Let him go," said Mr. Vernon, when he understood the matter, "we don't need him." And again they spurred on.

Lieutenant Ballanche had a fresher, stronger horse than the one that bore Mr. Vernon and by the time that they had swung round the point with the little plantation house full in view he was considerably in the lead.

It was with an indescribable stifling sensation that he leaned over his saddle-horn and gazed between straggling orange trees toward the low doorway beyond a broken gate. The place looked lonely and desolate; it was a picture of silence set against a gray background of wilderness.

Mr. Vernon and Ballanche had ridden into the enclosure and were approaching the house. The walk or pathway was narrow and Mr. Vernon was now in advance. Suddenly he drew his horse back with such force that it almost stood upright on its haunches; at the same time he uttered a deep ejaculation of surprise and horror.

A man lay dead, doubled up across the path near the front-door of the house. Mr. Vernon recognized the face instantly, although it was pinched and distorted.

Peevy saw that something startling had been discovered and hurried through the gate.

"W'at air the matter now, fellers?" he inquired. Then, seeing the dead body, he added: "W'y, it air thet thar feller 'at went er cavortin'—"

He was interrupted by a sharp cry from the house, and the door was flung wide open.

"Etarnal Jerusalem!" he exclaimed. "Jes' look, will ye!"

Mr. Vernon and Ballanche were already looking. They had seen many dead men that day, had ridden past them and over them, but this one demanded more than a glance, at least from Mr. Vernon, who did not look at once, even when the voice rang out from the opening door of the house.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A WOUNDED LION.

Meantime, Mrs. Vernon, Pauline and Mademoiselle de Sezannes had not been ill-treated beyond what the exigencies of life in the immediate vicinity of the British camp made inevitable. The commanding officer ordered them to be kept in the small house already described and furnished them food and a guard. Under the circum-

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stances, this was the best that he could do. He felt that to send them through the lines would be a dangerous proceeding, as he was relying upon surprising the Americans.

Colonel Loring found no difficulty in securing the favor of General Keane, and, later, General Pakenham himself recognized him as one who had done him a great and dangerous service years before. Moreover, Loring brought with him perfect maps and drawings of all the American defenses and full descriptions and reports of all the troops under Jackson and the probable order of their distribution, nor did he neglect to exhibit, as if half by accident, the newspapers containing the sensational accounts of his daring assault upon General Jackson's nose. He volunteered to lead a reconnoitering party in the direction of the American lines, and the result was a full confirmation of his previous statements regarding the probable plans of Jackson for the defense of New Orleans. All this aided him, but his personal magnetism went much farther. There was something in him that drew men of daring and reckless courage to him and held them there. His voice, his manner, his steady, fearless eyes and the look of absolute self-assurance which seemed to be the natural expression of his face made way for him even in the councils of the generals. Men of iron found him a man of adamant, nor did they look through to the darker side of his being; men rarely trouble themselves with what is not most available in their fellows.

Loring found time to be kind to the captive women, and especially to Pauline he showed almost tender solicitude in seeking her comfort. He did not often enter into conversation with her, nor were his visits more than merely formal. Pauline, however, in her great desire to know what was going on and what was likely to be the outcome of the impending battle watched for his coming each day, with the hope that he would have something to say which would lessen the strain of suspense.

Day after day went by, meantime, with nothing to break the dread monotony or to soften the horror of seeing the English troops swell in numbers and of hearing the preparation of an overwhelming column of attack which was meant to sweep the little American band before it like dry leaves before a breeze.

Mademoiselle de Sezannes hated Loring more and more as the time dragged on. She treated him with the cold courtesy of a scornful politeness when she was forced to accept a favor at his hands; but he appeared not to notice her mood. His whole mind seemed occupied with the thought of contributing all that he could to insuring the best disposition and direction of the British forces. The little and yet in some way strangely significant marks of attention shown by him to Pauline were the only signs of any turning, even for a moment, from his concentrated singleness of interest.

The house on which our attention for the present centers stood at the edge of a dark wood bordering a swamp. Its front looked toward the plain upon which were being made the preparations for battle. Westward and not far away the muddy current of the Mississippi tumbled along darkly behind a low levee. It was a rough wooden building plainly furnished and but recently abandoned in great haste by its owner. Two elderly slave-women were appointed to serve the captives.

After the night-fight already hastily sketched, Loring came to the house and reported that the Americans had shown their strength and mode of warfare and that now it would be an easy thing to attack them in force and destroy them. He appeared somewhat more animated than Pauline had ever before seen him; but she could not be sure what his excitement indicated; it may have been, she thought after he was gone, no more than the afterglow of the battle-spirit. It was evident, even to her inexperienced mind, that the British had not been successful in the engagement; but when, later on, the reinforcements landed and poured across the plain, when the great cannon went lumbering by, when the flags streamed out and the thousands of red uniforms shone in thick array, seen in the distance through the straggling orange-grove, she felt that all hope was indeed gone.

Mrs. Vernon and Mademoiselle de Sezannes had been despondent and given over to moaning and tears from the first. Pauline, even when despair came, preserved her composure. Loring noted this steadfastness of will in the girl, and it seemed to appeal to him as through a strain of likeness to his own character, strange as such a comparison might be; and once, when Mademoiselle de Sezannes looked at the two standing near each other, she saw, as by a flash of sudden revelation, a striking resemblance between their faces, especially in the way of lengthening and narrowing the eyes in moments of deep feeling.

"I hate you almost," she said to Pauline, when Loring was gone, "because you look like that man."

"Look like him!" exclaimed Mrs. Vernon. "What a horrible jest!"

"It is horrible, but it is no jest," said Mademoiselle de Sezannes, with emphasis. "Just now their eyes were precisely alike."

Pauline was offended, and drew herself up to turn away. The quick rush of resentment, well repressed though it was, exemplified the theory of Mademoiselle de Sezannes. Madame Vernon saw the flattening and leveling of the beautiful eyelids and caught the momentary gleam from the lengthening eyes.

She started hysterically, and would have spoken had not Loring returned rather hastily to say that the battle would open on the following morning—this had just been determined upon—and that it was absolutely necessary for them to remain close shut in the house until all should be over.

And so when, in the small hours of the following night, the low, wide stir began, the women knew that the British columns were forming for the great assault.

The day was a terrible one for them. They could not see any part of the battle; but the grinding roar of it rolled over the house, which shook as if with an earthquake. It seemed to them that they could hear the despairing cry of the Americans as they fell crushed and bleeding under the victorious columns of their enemies. Mrs. Vernon clasped the tiny gold crucifix which hung at her throat and kneeling in agony prayed and wept. Mademoiselle de Sezannes cast herself upon a couch and hid her face in the pillows; but Pauline stood at a front window straining her eyes and ears to see and hear.

Before the middle of the forenoon the thunder and the patter of the fight gradually ceased, and soon enough the broken and fear-crazed columns of the British came wildly straggling back across the plain. What had been solid walls of red uniformed soldiers moving with rhythmic vigor and steadiness, was now a confused rabble, leaderless and dispersed, all flying away from an imaginary charging column of Americans.

"Heaven be praised!" cried Pauline. "They are flying! They are defeated! They are driven back all wild and routed!"

She precipitated herself upon her mother in an ecstasy of joy.

Mademoiselle de Sezannes sprang up and ran to the window. Off in the distance, as she looked between the orange-trees, she saw men bearing litters, rolling cannon, running, limping, gesticulating, assisting wounded comrades, leading horses on which lay dead officers—it was a terrible sight; but in the first rush of her realization of triumph she felt no horror from the scene. She clasped her hands together and gazed with wide open tearless eyes.

It was nearly noon when the servants brought in breakfast; meantime the British had disappeared, and a great silence lay upon the plain and the woods. The ladies had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours, and now, with the great reaction from the strain of terrible anxiety, there came hunger. But food did not seem to attract them; they ran to the windows and doors every minute or two only to turn away, disappointed, from the desolate scene.

At last, however, a footfall on the door-steps was accompanied by the voice of Colonel Loring.

"Miss Pauline, will you let me in, please?" he called.

Pauline ran to the door and opened it. At first she did not notice that Loring was bloody. He stood quite erect, and his face showed no sign of suffering.

"Come in," she cried, "come in, Colonel Loring. It is so good of you—we are so frightened, so bewildered, so lonely."

She extended both hands with the impulse of her delight at the relief his presence afforded.

He inclined his hatless head and smiled in acknowledgment of her greeting, and now she saw that both his arms hung powerless, dangling and bloody.

"Oh, you are hurt, wounded!" she exclaimed. "You have been shot!"

"It is of no consequence; some light hurts that will give no trouble. Is there any wine in the house?"

He came in with a firm step and sat down in a large armed chair.

There was a half-bottle of claret, which Pauline fetched. He drank the whole of it thirstily.

"It is a wonder that this is left," he said, nodding toward the empty bottle after Pauline had poured the last drop down his throat.

"General Gibbs sent it to us," she said.

"And he is killed; so is Pakenham; indeed, they are all killed; the army is destroyed, it destroyed itself. What a set of dolts they all were!" Loring spoke rapidly, but seemingly without much feeling.

Before he had finished there was a knock at the door. Mademoiselle de Sezannes, who chanced to be nearest it, flung it open.

Vasseur came in without ceremony and stood before Loring, his face twitching with the ecstasy of terrible passion. Immediately he began to pour forth the most horrible curses, and between them he sandwiched what he knew of Loring's past history. It was a denunciation at once eloquent and brutal beyond description. Loring for once was unable to meet an exigency with a prompt bar. He sat calmly enough; but he could not stop the current. Vasseur, in his wild wrath, seeing that his victim was apparently helpless, went with a rush into the revolting details of the life which he and Loring had passed together as outlaws in Spain. They had robbed a convent, killing a nun to get the jewels and precious stones afterward taken from Vasseur by Pierre Rameau. He went on to tell how Loring and Pierre Rameau were the same man, and how Margaret, the robber's wife, had been murdered by him in cold blood because she sought the protection of a priest to escape brutality.

It was a story to chill the blood of any hearer, and its double climax was reached when Vasseur dwelt upon the whipping that Rameau had caused him to submit to and the attempt to murder old man Burns in the wilderness of the Pearl-River country.

The ladies retreated before the blasphemous torrent of mingled confession, denunciation and profanity.

Vasseur spoke so rapidly that his say was soon ended, and then he sprang at Loring with a dagger.

"Die, Pierre Rameau!" he shrieked, in creole patois. "Die! Die!"

But Pierre Rameau had heard such tragic commands before this. He had played a part in tragedy too often to be taken by surprise and laid out so easily.

"Fool!" was all that he said; and, rising with the promptness of a steel spring, he kicked the little man through the open doorway into the yard.

Vasseur arose from where he had fallen, put his hands on his chest, tottered for a few paces along the walk toward the gate, then sank down, all doubled together, and lay still.

Pierre Rameau stood gazing at the crumpled body for a moment, and when, presently, he lifted his calm, almost stolid eyes, he saw a tall form coming through the gate.

It was Burns. The old man saw him, and quickened his pace almost to a run.

Rameau turned about and passed through the house without a word. Going out, he crossed what had been a vegetable garden, kicked some palings from a fence, went through, and was soon in the depth of the wood.

He was feeling the effect of his wounds. Not only were both his arms badly hurt; but a gun-shot rent in his breast, though it bled little, was weakening him rapidly.

Pauline saw him going away and ran after him entreating him to return and have his hurts cared for. Something in his face had told her that he was desperate, hopeless, and she felt a great swell of pity for him rising in her heart.

She had not noticed the fall of Vasseur or the approach of Burns. Just within the gloom of the moss-hung forest she overtook Rameau and sprang lightly before him.

He stood still and looked at her. A smile stole into his face; he tried to lift a hand; but could only twitch a shoulder. She was flushed and panting, her lips apart, her bright hair disheveled. Her appearance seemed to touch him with some deep emotion.

"My sweet sister," he murmured, then as if shaking off an illusion, he sprang past her while she was pouring forth entreaties, and fairly ran away from her into the gloomy swamp wood.

Pauline stood, like one in a dream, with the words, "my sweet sister," ringing strangely as if from distance to distance through her soul.

She saw, without fairly realizing it, the tall, gaunt form of Burns go by with long, half-feeble, half-vigorous strides.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 48.]

NEVA'S THREE LOVERS.*

BY MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

Author of "Her Double Life," "Beryl's Husband," "Edith Trevor's Secret," etc.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE END OF THE GAME.

THE yacht had arrived at the loch, at the foot of Wilderness Mountain just as the dusk was falling. Craven Black had immediately gone ashore in the mist and gloom, climbed the rugged steep, and hastened to his temporary home. The windows were all uncurtained, and a broad stream of watery light penetrated for a little distance into the darkness. There was no sound of barking of dogs, and the silence struck Craven Black's ears strangely. The front door stood wide open, but no one was in the hall.

He entered the house and looked into the drawing-room. Mrs. Artress was there, pale and perturbed, a restless spark in her ashen eyes and disorder in her attire. She uttered an exclamation as she beheld Mr. Black, and sprang toward him, exclaiming:

"I am so glad you are come, Craven. Have you got the medicines for Octavia?"

"Yes. How is she?"

"I don't know. I am very anxious about her. She looks like death, and her breathing is very strange. She won't lie down, but just wanders about the house like some restless ghost. I think that her lungs are congested, and that she is in serious danger. I really think you ought to take her to Inverness and put her in a physician's care. What if she should die in this remote Wilderness?"

"She won't die while she is able to 'wander about the house,'" responded Craven Black, lightly. "When people are seriously ill they take to their beds. Why are the dogs shut up?"

"Octavia ordered it. She could not bear their noise; it drove her wild, she said."

"Humph. Nervous. She will be better of her cold in a day or two. How is Miss Wynde?"

"She is still obstinate, Craven, and never says a word against her starvation diet. I am afraid we've made a serious mistake in our estimate of her. She is what you sometimes call 'game all through.' She'll die, but she won't give in. I wish we had let her alone, and allowed her to marry whom she pleased. That escapade of hers on the mountain may cost Octavia her life. And if Octavia dies, her four thousand a year dies, too, and I shall have to become a companion to some lady, and lead a horrible life of dependence and fear, and you will have to go back to your precarious existence."

"You are a pleasant comforter," said Craven Black, impatiently. "All these horrors exist only in your imagination. Octavia will outlive us all. Where is she?"

"In her own room."

Black ran up the stairs to his wife's room. He found Octavia standing before the fire, clad in a loose wrapper, whose bright hue made her pallid face look hideous. Her eyes were strangely large, and they were thrown into relief by heavy black hollows under them. Her long black hair hung loosely down her back. She looked thin and old and spectral, all the brightness and beauty gone from her. Her features were hard in their expression, and the wicked soul declared itself plainly in her unlovely countenance.

Craven Black recoiled at sight of her. How two or three days had changed her! He felt a sudden repugnance to her. He had a horror of weakness and illness, and a fear came over him that his cousin's terrors might not be without foundation.

"Oh, it's you, Craven?" cried Octavia, in a thin, querulous voice. "How long you have stayed. Did you get my medicine?"

"Yes, here it is;" and Black produced a bottle from his pocket. "It's a cough mixture."

"I feel such a tightness here," and Octavia put her hand upon her chest. "Such a horrible restriction. I dare say, though, it will be all right in the morning. I remember, Craven, you hate sick people. Your dinner is waiting. Let us go down."

"You had better go to bed," said Craven, abruptly.

"I cannot lie down. My chest pains me

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when I attempt it. Had you good luck at Inverness?”

Craven Black assented.

“Did you see any one you knew.”

“No; how should I? None of my acquaintances come to the Highlands in November. I was as unrecognized at Inverness as I should be in Patagonia. I will change my clothes and take you down to dinner.”

He went into his dressing-room and changed his garments. Octavia paced the room restlessly during his absence. He returned in the course of some minutes and escorted his wife down to the dining-room, where Mrs. Artress joined them.

He noticed that Octavia ate nothing at the meal. She complained of a lack of appetite, and moved restlessly in her chair, starting at every sound.

“I have read of the ancients placing a death’s head at their feasts,” said Black, grimly, “and I seem to have followed their custom. Octavia, do try to look like something better than a galvanized corpse.”

Octavia arose and went to the window, a spasm of pain convulsing her hard features. The heartless mockery of her confederate in guilt smote upon her in that hour of suffering like an avenging sword. How she had loved him and had sinned for him! And this was her reward!

Craven Black finished his dinner quietly and drank his wine. Then he arose with an air of gayety and said:

“I have everything you sent for, Octavia, and some things you neglected to send for. We can stand a siege in this old house all winter, if need be. The boys are already bringing up the hampers. Will you have a look at them?”

Octavia assented with a heavy sigh, and passed out into the front hall with Craven Black and Mrs. Artress.

The three seamen stood in the hall, one with a lantern in his hand, the other two in the act of depositing their hampers upon the floor.

And over the edge of the plateau, at that very moment, and not a score of rods distant, four men were coming silently and slowly, with stern faces and cautious mien, toward the house.

“That is right,” said Craven Black, examing the hampers. “Bring up the wine baskets next.”

The three men went out. The four pursuers stood in the shadow of the trees as they passed, and then resumed their approach to the dwelling.

“I ’d like to see how the girl stands her imprisonment,” said Craven Black. “I ’ll let her know that we are prepared to spend the winter here. By the way, Octavia, I posted that second letter to Brussels to-day, addressed, under cover of a letter to Celeste’s sister, to Lord Towyn. We have nicely hoodwinked the earl, and I should like the girl to know of our successful maneuvers. Where is Celeste?”

“In Neva’s ante-room.”

“Come, then. We will visit our prisoner.”

He went upstairs, Octavia following slowly, assisted by Mrs. Artress. Celeste sat at work in the ante-room of Neva’s chamber, and admitted the visitors into Neva’s presence, entering with them.

And outside the house, upon the lawn, the four shadows came nearer and yet nearer. They flitted up the steps of the porch and in at the open door. They paused a moment in the deserted lower hall, and then, hearing voices above, came silently and darkly up the stairs and paused at the door of the ante-room.

That room was deserted. The light streamed from the inner room, where Neva and her enemies were grouped. The sound of voices came out to the intruders. Softly, with sternly eager faces, the four crept across the floor of the ante-room, and two—Sir Harold Wynde and Lord Towyn—looked in upon the Blacks and their young victim.

The earl breathed hard, and would have leaped in like a lion to the rescue of his betrothed and to the confusion of his enemies, but Sir Harold Wynde held him back with a grasp of iron. The baronet meant to learn the falseness and perfidy of the wife he had so idolized and trusted, from her own lips.

And with what unconscious frankness she bared her guilty soul to his scrutiny! How completely she revealed her wickedness to him.

At the moment the intruders looked in with burning eyes upon them Octavia was speaking. Neva stood up near the fire, very pale and slender and fragile of figure, as her father and lover saw with swelling hearts, but her red-brown eyes glowed with the light of an undying courage, her head was poised haughtily upon her slender throat, and her lips were curled in a smile of dauntless defiance.

“You see, Craven,” Octavia was saying querulously. “We have starved the girl; we have fed her for weeks on bread and water, until her bodily strength must be nearly gone, and yet she stands there and defies us. What are we to do with her?”

“Miss Wynde does not sufficiently realize her own helplessness and our power,” said Craven Black. “Your friends think you travelling with us upon the Continent, Miss Neva. I have posted a letter to-day, apparently in your handwriting, under cover to a friend in Brussels, who will post it back to England. That letter is addressed to Lord Towyn. How he will kiss and caress it and wear it in his bosom, never doubting that you wrote it. I shall send him another letter next week, in your name, breaking your engagement with him.”

The young earl made a slight movement, but Sir Harold held him still in a grip of iron.

Neva’s pure, proud face flushed with scorn of her enemies.

“You may send as many letters as you please to Lord Towyn,” she said haughtily, “but you will not deceive him so readily as you did me with that letter purporting to come from papa. Oh, Octavia, I am glad papa never lived to know you as you are, base, treacherous and full of double-dealing. It is well for him that he did not live, for you would have broken his noble heart. He loved and trusted you, and you have repaid him by oppressing his daughter, whom he loved.”

The hard, haggard features of Octavia distorted themselves in a sneer.

The baronet wondered with a sudden horror if this was the woman he had loved. She looked a very Medusa to him now.

“Your father! Your ‘poor papa!’” mocked Octavia, with her hand upon her chest. “You have flung Sir Harold’s name and memory at me ever since we came to this place. And what was Sir Harold? A mere moneybags to me; that ’s all. If you hope to move me to pity, you couldn’t use a worse name to give effect to your appeal than the name of your father. I never loved Sir Harold Wynde, but I married him because he was rich. You needn’t look so horrified. People marry for such reasons every day, but they have not my frankness to avow it. There stands the man whom I have loved for years,” and she pointed at Craven Black. “It is his son whom I intend you shall marry—”

“To enrich you, madam!” cried Neva.

“Yes, to enrich me, since you say so!” exclaimed Octavia. “You have seventy thousand pounds a year; I have four thousand. I intend to equalize matters before you and I separate. Craven has just returned from Inverness with household stores sufficient to last us through the winter, and we shall stay here till spring if necessary to compel you to accede to our wishes. Your fare, every day through this winter, until you yield to us, shall be bread and water. I warn you not to carry your resistance too far, for I may be moved to deprive you of a fire.”

Neva’s lovely face continued to glow with her haughty scorn.

“You seem to think that I am deserted by God and man, and completely given over to you,” she cried. “You are mistaken. God has not deserted me. And I can assure you, Craven and Octavia Black, that before many weeks—before many days, perhaps—Lord Towyn will trace me to this place and rescue me from your hands.”

“Let him come!” sneered Craven Black. “Let him come!”

“Yes,” mocked Octavia, “let him come!”

Lord Towyn broke from the grasp Sir Harold still held upon him and stalked into the chamber.

With a shriek of delight, loud and piercing, Neva flew to his arms.

He held her clasped to his breast and backed toward the door, coming to a halt, looking at Neva’s enemies with stern, accusing eyes.

Craven Black, Octavia, Mrs. Artress and Celeste stared at him appalled. Not one could speak, but Octavia’s hand clutched at her chest with sudden frenzy.

“Lord Towyn!” gasped Mrs. Artress at last, faintly.

Craven Black broke forth into curses. His hand flew to his breast pocket, but fell again, as the door pushed open and Mr. Atkins and Ryan the detective entered the room.

“By Heaven, the game is up!” he cried.

“Yes,” said our young hero, “the game is up. You have played a daring game, Craven Black, and you have lost it.”

Octavia grasped for breath. The bitterness of defeat was almost more than she could bear. The sight of Neva in the arms of her lover nearly goaded her to madness.

“Yes, the game is up,” she said hollowly. “I suppose that you traced Craven here from Inverness; but how did you get upon our trail? How did you happen at Inverness? No matter. I do not care to know just yet. You cannot prosecute us, Lord Towyn, if you care to preserve your bride’s family name from scandal. I was Sir Harold Wynde’s wife, and that fact must shield me and my friends. You cannot take from me my jointure of four thousand a year, and with that Craven and I need not suffer, especially as we have the Wynde Heights estate. The game is up, Lord Towyn, as you say, but we are not discomfited nor overthrown. You will keep silence for the sake of the family. Besides, you know I am Neva’s personal guardian, and had a right to take her where I please.”

“That remains to be seen,” said the young earl, sternly. “Neva, darling, look up. I have news for you.”

Neva slowly lifted her pale, joyous face from her lover’s bosom, and stood a little way from him, eager, expectant and wondering.

“My poor little girl!” said the young earl, with an infinite yearning. “How you have suffered! I have brought you very startling news, and you will need all your bravery to bear it. Give me your hands—so! Neva, I have news from India.”

Something in his tone startled the girl. Her face grew paler on the instant.

“Yes, Arthur,” she said softly. “You have heard more about his death—poor papa?”

“A gentleman has come from India,” said the earl, telling the story much as Atkins had told it to him, “and he says—can you bear to hear it, darling?—he says that Sir Harold did not die out there at all; that he was attacked by a tiger, but was rescued by his Hindoo servant, who sent him away into the mountains in the care of other Hindoos, who kept Sir Harold a captive. And he says that Sir Harold is alive and well to-day.”

“Oh, Arthur, Arthur! Can it be?” cried Neva, trembling. “My poor father! I dreamed that he still lived, and my dream has come true. We will start for India at once and rescue papa. Oh, Arthur, do you think it is true?”

“Yes, my darling, I believe it.”

“Well, I don’t!” sneered Craven Black, turning pale nevertheless. “Such trumpery tales are common enough. I *know* Sir Harold is dead!”

“And I know it,” scoffed Octavia. “Alive, after an absence of so long duration! Bah! I wonder you haven’t more sense, Lord Towyn. Sir Harold Wynde alive! I should like to see him!”

The door swung slowly on its hinges, and Sir Harold Wynde walked into the room. He paused near the door and surveyed his false wife with stern and awful eyes.

Octavia gave utterance to a frightful scream—whose horror was indescribable—and bounded forward, her hand upon her breast, and fell to the floor upon her face.

Sir Harold’s awful gaze turned upon Craven Black, and seemed to turn that individual to stone. It rested upon Artress, and she cowered before it in terror. It passed over the Frenchwoman, and fixed itself upon Neva, softening and melting to almost more than human tenderness and love, and then, with a great joy shining in his keen blue eyes, he opened wide his arms. Neva sprang forward and was clasped close to his great heart.

The sacred joy of that reunion need not be dwelt upon.

Presently, as Sir Harold was about to lead his daughter from the room, his glance rested upon the still prostrate figure of Octavia.

“Look to your wife, Mr. Black,” he said, his irony arousing Black from his stupor. “She has fainted!”

Craven Black obeyed the voice of command, essaying to lift the prostrate figure of Octavia, but with a cry of horror he let it fall again, shouting hoarsely:

“She is dead! Octavia is dead!”

It was true. The engorged lungs had ceased their work. The heart had stopped its beating.

* * * * *

That night the yacht and the sloop started upon their return to Inverness. In the former were Craven Black, dispirited and despairing; Mrs. Artress, full of bewailings for the poverty into which she was now plunged; the French maid; the dead body of the false Octavia, and the three sailors in Black’s employ.

In the sloop were Neva and her friends.

The two vessels arrived safely at Inverness, and the remains of Lady Wynde were consigned to the grave. Craven Black did not wait to see the last rites performed for her who had served his wicked purposes so faithfully and so well, but, abandoning his cousin, put to sea in his yacht with the three sailors, not caring whither he went.

A week later the wreck of the yacht was found upon the North-German coast, and four bodies were washed ashore, two still living, two dead. And of the dead, one was identified as Craven Black.

Sir Harold, with his daughter and his friends, returned to Hawkhurst. The story of Sir Harold’s return to England had preceded them; and from the moment that the party alighted at the Canterbury station until after their arrival at their own home Sir Harold received one continued ovation. The joy bells were rung in the little village of Wyndham, and guns were fired. It was a day long to be remembered throughout that part of Kent.

The shadow that had fallen on Sir Harold’s life when he first learned the baseness of his second wife was dispelled by the tender love and attentions of Neva and her young lover. The smiles came back to his lips and the joy to his heart, and he learned the lesson that many must learn, that life need not be all dark and desolate because one friend of the many has proved false.

A few months later the joy bells rang again, and again the tenantry of Sir Harold made merry. The occasion was the marriage of the heiress of Hawkhurst to the young Lord Towyn. It was a joyous bridal. Sir John Freise and wife and their seven daughters were there. Mr. Atkins’s plain face beamed from the midst of the throng. Rufus Black and his gypsy-faced young wife, both happy and loving, had come down from Mount Street to grace the wedding, and no congratulations to the young bridal pair were more sincere than those uttered by Rufus.

At the wedding breakfast, while Neva, fair and proud and radiant as a star, sat beside her equally radiant young bridegroom, Rufus Black found opportunity to privately speak a word to the bride.

“It has all ended as it ought to, Miss Neva—my lady, I mean,” he whispered joyously. “Your father has got over his disappointment and grief, and looks like a king, as he stands yonder. I am getting to be a *man*—an honest, upright, strong-souled man, with genuine backbone and downright vim. Lally believes in me, you see, and upholds me, God bless her! And you and the earl are as happy as angels, Miss Ne—my lady, and you deserve to be. Mrs. Artress is a governess—where do you think?—oh, divine justice!—in the house of the Blights at Canterbury! What worse could we wish her? Our enemies—they were mine as well as yours, Lady Towyn—played a daring game, but they lost!”

[THE END.]

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THE LESSON OF THE HOUR.

BY DR. C. D. GARDETTE.

Already the heralds of Winter are calling;
His vanguards advance on the horns of the blast;
Already the sere leaves are fading and falling,
And the sun-gilded splendors of autumn are past.

Full soon, from the ice-rimmed and tempest-tossed regions,
The sprites of the storm and the elves of the frost
Will rush with their viewless and terrible legions,
And earth will be cold where their footsteps have crossed.

The stream will be mute that now sings in its flowing;
The forest will stretch its bare boughs to the sky;
The glebe will be dead to man’s reaping and sowing,
And nature in ice-shrouded slumber will lie.

The hearth will glow red in the warm-curtained chamber
And laugh at the frost-elves that shriek at the door;
But into the casements of want they will clamber
And strike their keen blades to the hearts of the poor.

Ah, bitter—aye, bitter and bleak—is the dawning
To these in this wild winter season of woe;
And ye who have plundered the people take warning:
Man’s vengeance is swift, though God’s vengeance be slow!

And stewards, to whom the Great Ruler hath trusted
The treasures of earth, lo, the tribute-time comes!
Unlock your broad gates ere their hinges be rusted
And pay in full store what ye garnered in crumbs!

For thus shall dread winter be shorn of its terrors,
And, with the first flush of the life-giving spring,
The hearts ye have succored will pardon your errors,
And all the glad air with thanksgiving shall ring!

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—The badge of office of the lord-mayor of London contains diamonds to the value of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, and the temporary owner has to give a bond for it before he is sworn in.

FROM THE WORLD'S FOUR CORNERS.

BY HELEN MARSHALL NORTH.

The "Stage-Struck Girl" is treated to an unsparing measure of common-sense by a writer in the Roxbury *News*. "To be an actress with the fearful fervor of a Bernhardt; to turn the blood cold with the intensity of a Ristori; to charm with the sweet naturalness of a Marlowe, is, indeed, my dear young ladies, exactly 'too grand for anything,' as you so aptly put it. What of the other side? The years of hard labor with small pay and great temptation; the necessity of studying and working and acting even when the body is sick and the limbs ache; to be gay and smile with the leading man on the stage, remembering all the time that he has grossly insulted you; to live in cheap hotels, and to be bullied by a stage-manager. The glamour over the life to the looker-on is bright, yet beneath all the screen of paint and tinsel there are wretchedness and misery and disappointment. Ponder it well, young women! It is a road oftener leading to misery than to success."

The Poet Tennyson's chief delight was not in the society of his fellows, but to sit in his quiet, secluded study, surrounded by choice books and either to work at his table, placed by a small window overlooking a fine glen and purple wood or to lounge by another window which opened on the terraces and framed a picture of beeches and hazels, the gray lines of undulating hills and the gleam of the distant sea. The poet's figure was bowed, and the once dark mass of hair was gray and fell back from a broad, high forehead, and he looked not unlike one of the heroes of his "Idyls."

Mrs. Lavina Fillmore, of Clarence, N. Y., a cousin of Millard Fillmore, recently celebrated her one hundred and fifth birthday. She was born in Connecticut, but has lived in New York the greater part of her long life. She has never seen the telegraph or telephone in operation and never been on a railroad train or expressed any desire to do so. She is a constant reader of newspapers, and has read and re-read the Bible until she knows much of it by heart. She is in such good health, that she has reasonable prospect of many years of life.

Mrs. C. C. Candy, of Denver, lately made the descent of Pike's Peak on a bicycle, the first woman, and doubtless for some time, the last, to venture on such a perilous undertaking. The descent occupied four hours and fifteen minutes. The daring cyclist had a dangerous fall from her wheel over a line of steep boulders, and encountered a pelting storm of rain and hail, but received no permanent injury from her unusual experience.

The Employees of Mme. N. G. Felicie, dealer in children's costumes and French underwear for ladies, in New York, receive, besides their regular salaries, one-half the net profits of the business. On her recent return from Paris, Madame Felicie distributed twenty-five per cent. of the profits in cash, deposited twenty per cent. in the bank for the employees and set aside the remaining five per cent. as a sick-benefit fund.

Miss Martha D. Bessey, of New York, who won the prize of fifty dollars for the best design of the badge to be worn by the lady-managers of the World's Fair, is a young lady of twenty-two, who received her art education at Cooper Institute, and is at present the only woman-designer employed by Tiffany & Co. Miss Sara Winthrop Smith, of Connecticut, received honorable mention among the competitors for the prize.

Ida Lewis, the lighthouse heroine, still cares for the Lime Rock Lighthouse, off Newport, R. I., where she lives alone with a gray cat and the sound of the waves for company. She has saved eighteen or twenty lives. Mrs. Martha White, of Copalis, in the State of Washington, has gained a similar name for courage. She went into the surf on a cold night in January and saved the lives of three sailors.

Some Elderly Philadelphia Women, inmates of the Pennsylvania Women's Home, are becoming conspicuous if not distinguished athletes in their declining years. At a recent picnic, two of them, Miss Hopple and Miss Houghton, each sixty-five years of age, indulged in a fifty-yard dash. A foot-ball contest and a foot-race were other features of the entertainment.

A Pretty But Extravagant young wife was recently presented with a neat little account-book by her husband, and was told to enter on one side all the money received, and on the other her expenditures. When examined, the two pages were found to contain these concise statements: "Received from Algy one hundred dollars" and "Spent it all."

A donkey named Mirambo was Henry M. Stanley's chief reliance when passing through one of the most savage districts of Africa. At the explorer's word of command, he would bray in the most stentorian manner, to the great alarm of the natives.

Miss Gertrude I. Barrett, daughter of Rev. B. F. Barrett, of Philadelphia, has been made general manager of the Swedenborg Publishing Association, since the decease of her father, who was for many years president of the association.

Spanish girls are not all perpetually draping themselves in lace mantillas and dancing to castanets. In the old college of San Salvador, several names of women are enrolled with those of the men.

Modjeska, the actress, converses in several languages, and is much interested in making a collection of works of the Elizabethan age.

A California woman has made over a hundred and fifty thousand dollars from a patent baby-carriage.

No Vassar girl has ever been divorced from her husband is the proud assertion of Vassar graduates.

CHILDREN ALL OVER THE WORLD.

Children Who Sing in Russia.

In Russia there is always a great demand for little ones who can sing well. Girls with clear, sweet voices and boys with notes like a thrush, are carefully cared for and cherished as they are in no other country. In America we are very fond of children who can sing. But they are not so absolutely necessary to us as they seem to be to the Russians.

The night before Christmas in all the Russian churches there is sure to be gathered together a very large assembly of people—so many, indeed, that the church is crowded out to the door-steps and people stand looking over each other's shoulders, trying to get just a peep into the church. The altar is sure to be beautifully decorated with candles and with images of the Christ-Child. And up to midnight very solemn services are held. Suddenly, at the stroke of the midnight-bell, everything ceases. The church is very brilliantly lighted, and, as the lights flood the church, a child's voice is heard pealing forth a Chrismas anthem. "*Kristos! Kristos! Kristos!*" is the burden of the song they always sing, and those who have had the pleasure of listening to a child's service held at midnight in Russia say that it is worth the trip all the way there just to hear the lovely child-voice sing the "*Kristos*" solo with the grand chorus of one hundred baby voices which follows in a Christmas refrain.

A Japanese Maid of Honor.

In Japan the national flower is the chrysanthemum—that beautiful flower which was on exhibition, a few weeks ago, in New York; and from the fact that chrysanthemums are now growing so beautifully in this country a very sweet little custom has originated, and it will probably be carried out in many a wedding this winter. It is what is known as a "fad." The person selected for carrying out this charming little fad is none other than a beautiful child, who must not be over five or six years old. At many of the beautiful winter weddings such a child is to be chosen as the Maid of Honor, whose duty it is to walk before the bride, carrying a huge bouquet of chrysanthemums in her arms. The little one must be quaintly dressed in Japanese costume, and must look, when she is ready for the wedding ceremony, so very much like a huge flower that you wonder why the bride does not pick her up and wear her.

A Wee Philadelphia Girl.

There lives in Philadelphia a tiny little girl named Katie Campbell Bryan. She was a year old last week; and, though perfectly well, and as pretty as the prettiest French doll you ever saw, she weighs a little less than eleven pounds. When ten days old, she weighed only a pound and three-quarters, and the clothes which were selected for her to wear were some that belonged to her sister's tiny wax-doll. Even now she is not as big as a good-sized French doll, and, though she can speak and say distinctly two or three words, and walk so fast that you would have trouble to catch her if she should run away, she could be easily carried on one of your hands. Her feet are only two inches long—no longer than your longest finger—and her hands are very, very tiny. She has a few teeth, which are very cunning and pretty; and all her toys, as you may imagine, have to be made especially for her.

What German Boys Drink.

German boys who work in the open air all day long, every day in the year except school-days, get very thirsty, of course, and must drink a great deal. The German mothers, to keep their boys well and hardy, are very expert in making nourishing drinks for them, to take the place of water, which is not nourishing at all, if taken in large quantities.

Honeyade is the favorite out-door drink for German boys. It is made in this way: An ounce of ginger is boiled for an hour in two quarts of water. Then two quarts of cold water, a pound of sugar, an ounce of lime-juice and two ounces of clear sweet honey are added. When all is cold, the white of an egg is whipped in and a lemon is squeezed over the honeyade jar. The sturdy little Germans are allowed to drink their weight, as the saying is, of this.

The Russian Eldest Son.

In many countries, boys have some peculiar attachment to their names, so that it is easy to distinguish a boy from his father, who is the head of the family. In Russia, the term "*vitch*" is added. Thus, the son of the czar is called the *czarvitch*, and you will find this title added to the name of the eldest son of every family sufficiently prominent to care for such things.

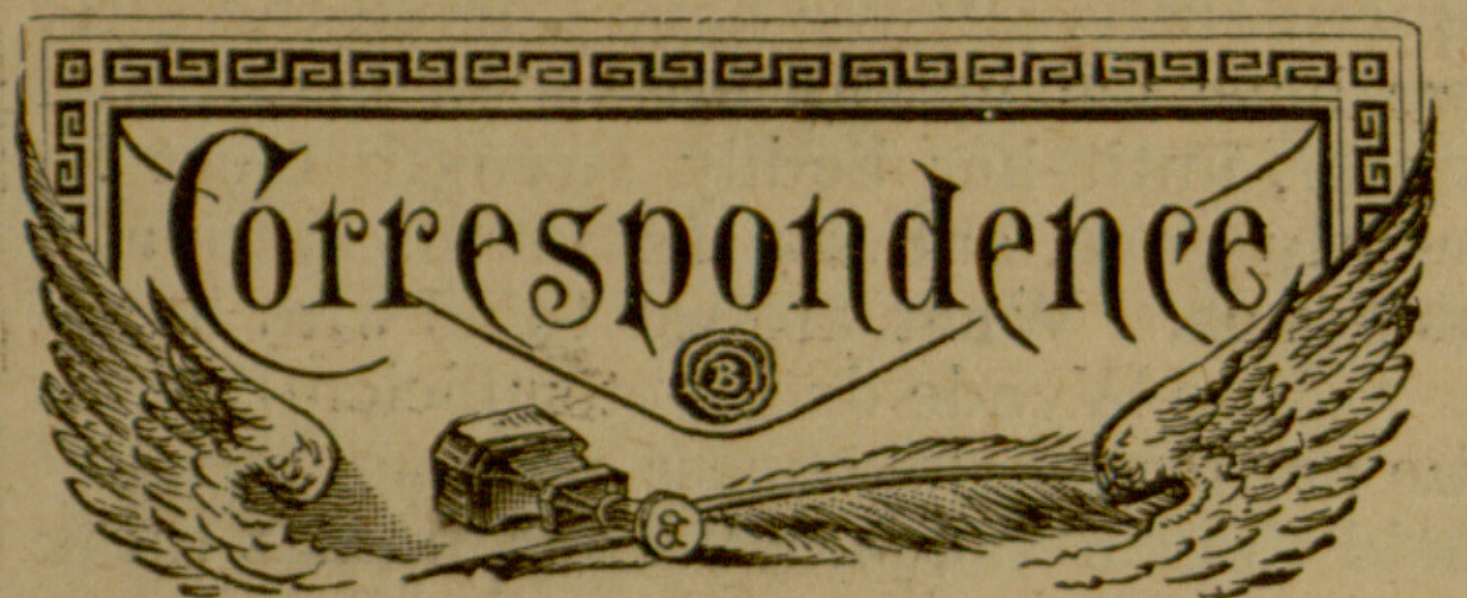
Of course, all the sons cannot receive the same title, so it is usually limited to the eldest son. Whenever, in Russia, your hear or see the title "*vitch*," you may always be sure that the young man or boy with the title is the eldest son of a father who is still living.

A New York Boy's Idea.

A New York boy, who is an amateur photographer, was, one day, complimented upon the neat appearance of his "solution" bottles.

"I paint the rims of the bottles with melted wax," said he. "This keeps them clean. Nothing sticks to them."

Perhaps some of the *Ledger* boys who are photographers would like to give this a trial.



Correspondence

Wedding Details.—Etta writes: "I am to be married in the beginning of December, perhaps not till the middle of the month. At first I intended to have a large wedding, and in March, but afterward thought it was foolish, as I would have to invite a large number of persons I cared nothing at all for. I thought then I would have only my intimate friends. The other day, through my brother's fault, I had a falling out with my mother and determined to be married next month, instead of in March, and to have the ceremony perfectly private. I thought I would be married in my travelling-dress at 8:30 P. M., and leave on the steamer for my future home at 9:30 P. M. Now, do you think I should go home and spend that hour, or would it be proper for me to go right from the church to the steamer? Do you think it would be improper for me to ask just six of my intimate friends to meet me on board and have proper refreshments, or should I go home and have them? Now, another thing: How shall I send announcements after I am married? Should I send cards alone or cards with some fruit-cake?" *Answer:* Put an end to the unfortunate falling out with your mother. If you must marry this month, go to her home after the ceremony and begin your married life with harmony in your own family. As for announcements, they should be engraved cards, and the prevailing style in your section can be easily ascertained by consulting any engraver or stationer. Do not send wedding-cake with them, except, possibly, to a few of your most intimate friends.

A Question of Domestic Jurisdiction. (Used Up.)—This correspondent says that he is a married man and tries to be a good father. But his wife thinks somewhat differently, and for the following reason, namely: He will *not* take care of the baby (when the nurse is out) even long enough for his wife to do any little necessary thing that the other children or her domestic duties may require to be done. Our correspondent's theory is that he pays a nurse to take care of the baby; it is his wife's business to see that she does her duty and that she be not allowed to absent herself when there can possibly be any baby-holding contingencies squinting in his direction. "And now, *Mr. Ledger*," he asks, "what do you say about it? Am I wrong?" *Answer:* You are evidently a lazy fellow and a selfish one. And, what is worse, unless you begin to put a check on your laziness and selfishness, they will rapidly increase until your disposition will become intolerable. You should by all means hold the baby whenever your wife wishes you to do so, not only out of kindness and gallantry toward her, but as a means of domestic grace and discipline, without which you bid fair to become a domestic grizzly.

True Love. (Staten Island.)—There are two ways in which men love. One man, for example, will love a woman for his own sake, that is to say, he extends his self-love to her, and wants her for his wife, because he supposes she will be an advantage to him—will minister to his prosperity, his pride, his vanity, and otherwise gratify his selfishness. Her happiness does not enter into his consideration; he takes no thought of what the effect of marrying him will be upon her life, or if he thinks of it at all it is in subordination to his own interests and wishes. Another man will love a woman for her own sake, that is to say, he sacrifices his selfishness at her adored shrine, and wants her for his wife because he thinks that he can make her happier than any other can, and is ready to subordinate all his wishes and affections to hers—to surround her with blessings, strew her path through life with flowers, and be to her an earthly providence. He, of course, wants her to be the same to him, and believes that she will be all that, and more, too; but he places her happiness first in all things.

Entertainment.—A correspondent who is amused by the curiosity of young people concerning the surnames of their future spouses contributes the following, as an amusing way for spending a half-hour on a winter's night: "Fill a glass one-third full of water and then get a wedding-ring (no other ring will do), and suspend it on a long hair, holding the two ends of the hair between the thumb and first finger, and suspend the ring in said position in the glass about a third of the distance from the top of the glass, and the ring will gradually swing from one side of the glass to the other; and the first time the ring strikes either side of the glass, begin saying the alphabet (a, b, c, etc.) until the ring stops swinging, and the last letter the ring struck will be the first letter of your future husband's or wife's surname."

Beginning Early. (Hawthorne.)—It is rather foolish for a boy of eighteen to think of "paying attention" to a child only fifteen years of age; and you are a sensible little girl to see the absurdity of your gallant's conduct in its true light. Persuade his parents to buy him a bicycle.

Christmas Gift. (Delta.)—The suitableness of a present depends altogether upon the means of the giver, and the tastes and preferences of the receiver.

Various. (J. T. T.)—No form of advertising is allowed in this column......(E. F. P.)—To obtain information regarding the assigning of positions on the police force at the World's Fair at Chicago, write to Hon. Benjamin Butterworth, Secretary of the Local Board of the World's Columbian Commission, Chicago, Ill......(H. K. S.)—The price paid for Mr. Whittier's poem, "The Captain's Well," was one thousand dollars.

*** *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*

Science

Financial Value of a Scientific Education. Information concerning the positions that graduates of scientific schools obtain is readily gained by consulting the lists of graduates usually given, with their occupations, in catalogues of the best institutions. To generalize, a scientific school of good reputation feels, in granting a diploma to a student of marked ability, that it places to his credit a fund equivalent to not less than $10,000. This statement will, doubtless, be readily understood if an instance be assumed of two young men of equal ability, one of whom graduates with honor from a scientific school at the age of twenty-two years, while the other engages in business with no assistance except his own energy and intelligence, which is true in a large majority of instances. Within four years after graduation, the young man from the scientific school will receive an annual compensation of at least $1500. The young man in business will meet with more than the average of success if at the end of four years he receives $3.00 per day for his services, unless he is located in New York or Chicago. Independently, then, of the great satisfaction which any educated person derives from his attainments and the greater enjoyment of the best interests of life which can only be appreciated by a cultivated mind, the young man who adopts a profession, within three years after graduation receives an annual income of six per cent. on $10,000, the difference between his annual salary and that of the young man in business. At the end of ten years, those who studied faithfully while at the scientific school are receiving from $4,000 to $8,000 or $10,000 a year from their salaries alone, while men of equal original abilities are doing well if they can earn over $3,000 without imperiling capital of their own.

Tobacco and the Tobacco Habit. In tobacco-leaves are principles common to all vegetation, such as starch, sugar, organic acids, salts, etc., and a peculiar alkaloid to which the plant owes its special qualities, called nicotine. Among the volatile principles that pass into the smoke along with nicotine are hydrocyanic acid and carbonic oxide. Of these, a notable amount is absorbed by rapid smokers swallowing this smoke, the gas passing into the circulation. These facts go far to explain the accidents that sometimes occur after hours passed in a medium saturated with tobacco, and even without smoking; and also explain the phenomena of intoxication produced by eating food left for a long time in similarly vitiated air. The decoction of tobacco destroys life in a time short in proportion to the strength of the dose. Tobacco may also poison through the lungs and through the skin. Smoking, which has had many imaginary ills laid to its door, is really responsible for attacks of suffocation, like angina pectoris, for nicotine amblyopia, for granular pharyngitis and for a special form of asthma. Nearly all excessive smokers are dyspeptics. Smoking is bad for everybody, especially for women and children. The habit of smoking, unlike alcoholism and morphinomania, can be broken up permanently. Tobacco has none of the seductions and dangers of opium and hasheesh, of ether, chloral and alcohol. Its action on the nervous system is weak and wholly especial. It does not put to sleep, but it calms and mollifies the sensibility of the organs. It causes an agreeable torpor, during which thought continues lucid and the capacity for work undiminished. Such is the attraction that it exercises, and which causes it to be sought for by so many thinkers and students.

Public Schools Unsectarian. The primary object of the public schools must always be to make citizens. Schools maintained by endowment and tuition may aim at any ideal scholarship. Denominational schools endowed and supported by persons who believe that *moral excellence* is the chief end of man may rightly expend a large amount of energy for the sole purpose of persuading every young person matriculated with them to embrace the Christian religion. Their scholarship may be of a very high order, but with that alone they are never satisfied; for that alone they do not exist. There are other institutions of acknowledged excellence whose sole aim is education. The physical and moral capabilities receive attention only so far as their cultivation is necessary to a complete development of the intellect. We do not see the ideal public school in either of the above institutions. It is supported by public taxation. Men of every shade of religious opinion and men of no religious convictions alike contribute. Manifestly religion can be tolerated in such schools only so far as it has a direct tendency to make better citizens. No sectarianism even then will be allowed by its patrons—*Journal of Education.*

During the cholera excitement, the town board of Franklin, Tenn., passed an ordinance forbidding the sale of watermelons in that place, and the local journal praised it for its wise precaution. The town authorities had probably heard that the disease was spread through the water-supply, and they weren't going to take any risks.

Football enthusiasts claim that this is the most scientific of all out-door sport, requiring thorough discipline, quick wits, strategic leaders and close observation of opponents' generalship, as well as courage and trained strength.

Nearsightedness is increasing yearly and alarmingly among schoolchildren.

WOMAN'S WORLD.

All questions which may be asked on the subjects treated in this Department will be answered in the Correspondence column.

The Giving of Gifts. There's much to be said on the subject of the giving of gifts. Birthday, holiday and anniversary gifts have become quite the rule in social circles, and there are very many occasions that call for some interchange of courtesies of this sort.

The custom has come into such general use that it is well to give it a little thought and consideration. Who shall make presents and to whom shall they be made? The indiscriminate bestowing of articles, things given merely in a perfunctory way, or because somebody expects them, or because one feels under some obligation, and thinks that the easiest way to cancel it is a common practice. No rules or regulations apply to such circumstances.

It may, however, be said that many an article is given that places the recipient in a position unpleasant and embarrassing.

The true spirit of giving is at its best when confined to one's own family or intimates. Outside of this it is meaningless as far as sentiment is concerned, and frequently becomes the most irksome and empty form. It is often said that it is a difficult matter to make presents to men. This need not be and will not if proper consideration is given to the subject. If the man has a taste for reading, a book, some interesting periodical or text-book cannot fail to be acceptable. If artistic, the world is full of exquisite pictures, etchings, engravings of all sorts, illustrated volumes, illuminated poems and the like, all useful, beautiful or ornamental.

Among the daintiest gifts are those which are the work of interested hands. Wealth may buy appropriate articles, but time, pains and thought are required to fashion some of the artistic belongings and adornings of an apartment.

There is one sort of gift that has in it boundless possibilities of sentiment. There are many persons in the world who have all of the tastes and training that wealth could give, but are without resources and must make their gifts up out of soul and spirit rather than hard cash. These people are almost always under obligation to friends who are much better off than themselves.

Of course, no present which merely represents value would be of any account in such cases as the wealthy friends usually have an abundance of rare and beautiful things. It remains, then, with the more humble giver to devise something out of the common—something which shall represent spirit and sentiment rather than means. A case in point is that of a family with very wealthy connections. This family is and has been for years the object of no end of attention, and it was, formerly, a somewhat vexing problem to find something appropriate for holiday and anniversary giving; but there was, fortunately, in this circle a member whose skill in preparing toothsome delicacies was almost unrivaled. This skill was exercised in the getting up of dainties fit for such occasions, and it came to be an understood fact that the boxes that arrived from this quarter on high days and holidays were more looked for and awakened greater enthusiasm than parcels that represented twenty times their value. There was always something new, some dainty, some delicacy, some new arrangement or artistically carried-out idea. And the recipients gathered about the boxes and exclaimed as they did over nothing else that marked the holiday season. The cost was comparatively trifling, but it represented so much skill and pains and forethought and interest that its value was not to be computed on the scale of dollars and cents.

The world is full of just such persons; and for those, who have not the means to give as they would like, the cultivation of some special talent enables them to do things and confer pleasures that will be more gratefully received than any mere purchased article can ever be.

How to Select Carpets. Floor coverings are among the most important of the furnishings of a room. If they are well chosen, appropriate and of suitable quality, the apartment seems to be about half furnished. Given a well decorated wall, a good carpet and a handsome mirror, and the rest of the furnishing is easy, and may be made very inexpensive if one has the ingenuity, patience and time to create and construct.

There are many things to learn about carpets and their purchase. The manufacture of them is full of catches and tricks, and in the desire to make cheap goods, quality and everything else are sacrificed to looks.

A carpet may be made with a very pleasing surface, fairly good colors and generally attractive appearance, but will last scarcely as long as it takes to make and put it down. The regular tapestry carpet is printed like old-fashioned calico. It is made all in one color which is the color of the ground, it is then run through presses on the same general principle as any other printed article. The color merely strikes through the outside of the wool. The pile is held in place only by single light binding thread, and a single strand of the wool may be drawn out for a yard or more by giving a gentle pull at one end.

While this sort of carpet may have its uses, it is the most unprofitable thing imaginable to buy. A chair drawn over it may pull the threads out, any roughness in the heel of the shoe is almost certain to do it, and ordinary use in a short time works the threads all out of place.

In body Brussels every color is dyed in the skein, then woven in, being thrown upon the surface only where this special color is required. In this class of goods the variety of colors is necessarily limited, as with present machinery only a certain number can be handled independently of each other.

Body-Brussels carpets are usually designated by the number of frames which signify the number of colors used. In all carpets of this kind, the wool surface is thrown through the fabric, and shows to some extent on the back. Unscrupulous dealers have so arranged their machinery that the back of tapestry-carpet is stained or clouded to follow as clearly as possible the colors on the surface. By this means, unsophisticated or ignorant persons are imposed upon, as their idea that the colors show through is easily met by the stained appearance on the back.

Of course, such goods are a most barefaced fraud and should be treated as such. That reputable dealers sometimes handle them is not at all to their credit.

What is known as velvet carpet is merely a tapestry with the pile cut. Wilton carpets have the interwoven back of the body Brussels, are yarn-dyed and unquestionably the most durable carpets made.

Moquettes and Axminsters are very thick and sometimes very durable, but the purchase of such carpets may be said to be almost a lottery.

For ordinary use and at moderate cost, body Brussels is by far the best investment in the carpet line.

Racing on Public Conveyances. Public safety, common sense and regard for the lives of passengers demand that racing on public conveyances be stopped peremptorily. If the rules and regulations of the companies are not sufficient, the most stringent laws should be passed, with heavy penalties for their violation.

While racing might be carried on for any length of time without disaster, the chances are that employees would grow much more reckless with every indulgence in this practice, and some day the most frightful accident would follow. Especially should care be exercised in boat-racing. There is much to be said in favor of the comment of the old colored man who objected to racing on the Mississippi River. "Ef ye's blowed up on de lan', dar ye is; but ef ye's blowed up on de water, whar is yer?"

It is no uncommon thing for engineers of parallel railroads to crowd on all steam, and, strangely enough, however much *they* enjoy the race, the passengers are equally interested, forgetting for the moment the frightful possibilities of the situation.

There is something to be said in excuse for the engineers, for there are temperaments and dispositions that find it almost impossible to resist the temptation to race, and passengers who cheer and applaud the performance serve as a sort of incentive to a repetition of what they consider such rare sport.

There is, it must be confessed, the keenest delight in such rivalry, and only level heads and the most iron-clad rules can restrain it. But while it is pleasant and all that, the risk is infinitely too great, and even those who enjoy the excitement of the moment are often filled with terror when they come to consider the dangers they have passed, and are led to the conclusion that it is amusement much too dearly bought.

Kitchen Necessities. When one expects good service, it is an important item that suitable utensils and equipments be provided. Many a housemaid wastes hours of her time every week in the almost hopeless search for dusters, scrubbing-cloths and the thousand and one bits of fabric that one must have about the kitchen. Many housekeepers do not seem to realize that there are many things that require a little piece of rag or, possibly, very soft paper. Odds and ends of cloth of all sorts are thrown away, torn up or, as one over-thrifty woman used to do, put into the heater. Indeed, in more than one family the appetite of the hot-air furnace is insatiable, and has been for years fed with articles of great value, if properly utilized.

There should be special cloths for lamps, windows, paint, floors and stoves. For these latter, worn and otherwise useless lamp and floor cloths are desirable. When these cloths are of little value for their legitimate purpose, they should be thrown into a dish of strong soda-water and boiled for half an hour, when they may be rinsed and put up to dry. They are then useful for rubbing the stove, the hearth or the grates, after which they still may do service in kindling the fire.

The good housekeeper rarely finds it necessary to throw anything away. Her economy, however, consists largely in starting right and making one article do the work of half a dozen. Old muslin may be first used as window-cloths, then go through the various stages of paint, lamp and stove-cloths just as well as not. Instead of this, we often see the hearth and grates rubbed with bits of snowy-white muslin or cambric caught up in a hurry, because there is neither system nor economy about the house.

Folding-Beds in Walls. The folding-bed is no doubt by thoughtless persons considered a most important invention, but it may be questioned whether it is not the most damaging of all modern appliances. It has made smaller rooms possible and this means less air, less light and more crowding. But the folding-bed is an established fact and evidently has come to stay. This being the case, it might be well to arrange it in the safest and most economical fashion. The folding-bed set into the wall is probably the newest feature in this article of furniture, but as a rule the plan is so faulty and the conditions so unfavorable that nothing but objections can be urged to them.

If a bed is to be set into a recess in the wall the entire space should be lined with zinc with soldered joints. The edges of the zinc should be turned out against the face of the wall and a narrow molding nailed on. Before putting in place, the back of the molding should be thickly covered with soft putty, and every crevice and crack should be carefully stopped. If this is done it is possible to preserve sanitary conditions and freedom from insects, as the zinc may be washed and, in cases of infectious disease, thoroughly fumigated. The supports for the bed can be put in with metal couplings tightly screwed down. Paint and varnish are enemies to insect life and many sorts will not harbor on smoothly varnished surfaces. The open spaces in wood-work are their favorite haunts, but clean polished wood they do not fancy. Heavy substantial couplings holding a wire mattress provided with supports to keep the wire at the proper level while in use would be inexpensive and as cleanly as any such arrangement could possibly be. All cumbersome and complicated boxing wood-work and upholstering are simply a nuisance. The mattress can be held in place by the usual bands or straps, or a strong edging may have button-holes to slip over regular carriage buttons driven in the sides of the frame of the wire spring.

This is the simplest, most cleanly and manageable form of folding-bed. The necessary weights are easily attached to the head, and there should always be an arrangement by which the bed could not be closed accidentally. Easily removable curtains or paneled doors like those of a wardrobe could be provided, but in case these latter are used, there should be a space left at top and bottom for ventilation.

No bed that is kept tightly closed into a wall-box all day is fit for the sleeping place of any human being, but the folding-bed even in its very best form is an evil, and although it is a necessary one, every precaution should be taken to make it as tolerable as possible.

Pastry. It is a fine art to make pastry. Just why this is so it would be difficult to say, for some persons who are otherwise wretched cooks make the most admirable paste of all sorts. They seem, as one might say, to take naturally to it. There are others, veteran cooks, whose pastry is almost as indigestible as paving-stones. Give them all the rules, formulæ, recipes, directions imaginable, and the result is the same, until they get utterly discouraged and give it up.

The secret of good pastry, if it can be said that there is a secret, consists in dexterous handling and working in a cool place, for it is a very difficult matter to make really first-class pie-crust in a very hot room.

The finest of puff-paste is made with butter *ad lib.* Take one pound of butter, about two or three tablespoonfuls of ice water or, what is much better, very finely scraped ice, and just sufficient flour to make it possible to handle it. Make a paste by pressing the butter into a flat piece, sprinkling flour over it, pressing it out again, then fold it over and continue pressing it until sufficiently mixed. A teaspoonful of baking-powder should be added to a cup of flour, and this should be used first. After that, only as much flour as is absolutely necessary. Some cooks wash the butter to remove a portion of the salt, but this is not necessary, unless the butter is very salt. Use a rolling-pin which has been kept for an hour or so in the ice-box, but not allowed to get wet. As soon as the paste is sufficiently rolled, cut it in required shape, fit it over the plate or dish and put into the oven immediately.

If very juicy pies or tarts are to be used, break a couple of eggs into the plate containing the rolled-out paste, whirl them around so that the entire inside portion of the crust is wet. When baked, this will form a semi-impervious coating, which will not soak through for some time.

More ordinary pie-crust can be made with half lard and half butter. Of late, some of the best cooks have taken to using cottolene, which is a mixture ot cotton-seed oil and beef suet. This is very much better and more wholesome than what is known as cooking-butter or almost any sort of lard. It gives new possibilities to pastry and all articles that need shortening.

Delicious pies are made by lining a pie-dish with paste, covering it with egg as described and baking it; then, having ready some prepared fruit, lemon meringue or other suitable filling, put this into a dish, cover the top with very narrow strips of pie-paste laid on in a sort of lattice-work, and bake in a quick oven for five or ten minutes. Cranberries, dried peaches or dried apples, properly stewed and seasoned, make excellent filling for pies of this sort.

There is a decided difference of opinion as to the sort of dish to be used, but many of the best cooks prefer tin pie-plates to those of china or earthenware. There is an excellent reason for this: Continual baking and heat make the earthenware absorb a certain portion of the grease, and this, after a time, becomes rancid, and no amount of cleaning, scouring or scraping can remove it. When the next pie is baked, the heat throws out enough of this stale flavor to seriously affect the taste of the pie.

Many cooks have been accused of using cheap lard or rancid butter when the entire blame for the objectionable flavor lay in the quarter-of-a-century-old plate on which it was baked.

A Relishable Dish. All careful housekeepers experience more or less annoyance in the dressing of celery, as they realize that only about half of it is available for the table. The green portions with many of the leaves are so fresh and delicate-looking that it seems a pity to throw them away, and except in soups or salads there is but little use for them.

An excellent way of utilizing this heretofore waste material is to wash it thoroughly, to cut it in pieces about three-fourths of an inch long, and put it in a sauce-pan with a little water to boil, letting it simmer for an hour and a half or two hours, adding a pinch of salt. Let the water boil nearly out, then add a little cream, a small piece of butter and a little flour or cornstarch wet with water. The cornstarch is much more delicate, although some people seem to prefer flour. When done, this should be like a thick batter. Slices of toast may be prepared and the hot celery put upon them, a large spoonful to a slice. A tiny bit of butter and the least possible dash of pepper may be added; then send to the table and serve immediately.

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FASHION CORNER.

Fashion and Fancies. The woman who can make over and remodel and reconstruct and create something new out of something old is just now the feminine pearl of great price. She is valuable not only to the community at large, but especially so to herself. This sort of woman can take two or three old dresses and make some new ones out of them that will turn her unsophisticated friends green with envy. She never wastes anything; she never throws a bit or scrap of any handsome fabric away. Her millinery-boxes, the trunks in which the odds and ends of pieces are put away, the scrap-bags and baskets hidden secretly in some out-of-the-way corner, are prolific of beautiful things. She will take an old scarf, dress it over, add a few ends of ribon from the bonnet of some summers ago, plait up a bit of lace, add a stick-pin or two, and she has a trimming for the front of her dress that can scarcely be duplicated in the swellest shops on the most fashionable thoroughfares. A lace flounce or scarf is gathered or draped in some artistic way to finish a corsage or create a panel in a skirt. The velvet trimming from last year's dress makes jacket fronts and all of the other little decorative fancies that add so much to the newest and most attractive costume. If the pieces are not large enough for her own wear, they are just the thing to fit up costumes for the youngsters, and, lacking this, the amount of material she can turn out for church fairs, benevolent-association bazaars and holiday presents is something amazing. Everybody wonders how she does it, but only a few understand it. The clerk who sells her goods could probably tell more about the secret of this sort of thing than any one else, and he would most emphatically declare that the reason of it all is that "she never buys trash. All of her materials are good." In her entire wardrobe there isn't a cheap or flimsy bit of textile of any sort.

If the material is thin, it is fine and elegant; if it is thick, it is superb; and the consequence of all this is it never wears out, rarely gets out of fashion, is cleanable, renovatable and make-over-able. Whatever her follies and failings may be, she is an artist in buying and a miser in the care she takes of the precious bits of fabric that come into her possession; and, as a consequence, she is never without resources, and always has something unique or quaint or elegant, something that seems to have been made expressly for the purpose for which she uses it, and for which purpose nothing else would answer quite as well.

Fashion Notes. The very pronounced bell-shape of the new skirts is said to be a forerunner of the hoop, which infliction we may beg to be kept from. What would become of women in big hoops if they encountered the crowds on some of our thoroughfares is a question that the most daring imagination would find it difficult to grapple with.

A pretty reception-dress is of rose-pink bengaline and white lace. The trained skirt has a panel at the side, which is closed at intervals with elaborate jeweled ornaments. Between these ornaments puffs of the lace show through. A soft girdle of silk is fastened at one side of the waist with rosettes. The full body and puffed sleeves are of lace.

Fur, velvet and galloon are seen on some of the newest imported garments. The use of these materials on the same dress is perhaps open to criticism, but they are sometimes used, nevertheless.

Fashions for little girls seem to have absorbed all of the good points for which the costumes of their mothers and elder sisters have been noted.

Colored-kid slippers and shoes are embroidered in steel, gold or jet, and red shoes have black patent-leather toes and very fine jet embroidery.

Little girls' dresses with velvet yokes, shirred waists, full sleeves and velvet collar and cuffs are preferred for ordinary wear.

Marie-Stuart bonnets are again in fashion, and, as they are extremely becoming to many faces, will no doubt be popular.

There is a very strong rivalry as to who will produce the best and most approved dress for wear on the wheel.

A black-velvet hat is trimmed with magenta velvet and a cluster of magenta and yellow roses, with black lace.

Large plaids are fashionable, and dresses are made either entirely of plaid or in combination with velvet.

The old-fashioned moss trimming is revived, and is shown in mixed colors and all popular shades.

White-felt hats are trimmed with large bows of bright-red velvet and aigrettes and dagger of fine jet.

Slippers of black undressed kid have gilt toes and are tied with yellow-silk ribbons.

Bead trimmings in Persian colors are among the most elegant importations.

Double-sleeve capes of velvet are seen on cloth and rich silk dresses.

New skirts are narrower at the top and wider at the bottom.

Black-satin tea-gowns trimmed with lace are a new fancy.

NOCTURNE: VENICE.

In this dim red and ancient palace dreaming—
Like Mariana in the Moated Grange—
Of thee, Colette, upon yon waters strange,
Mournful and strange, in spectral moonlight gleaming,
The nightly pageant takes unwonted seeming;
And while the fronts of marble melt and change
To floating mists that the Canale range,
Clouds loom like castle walls, with banners streaming.
By gondoliers or ghosts steered silently,
Funereal barks, like black swans in procession,
Betray my fancy to this thought's possession:
The passing of my dead dreams here I see.
Ah, Venice, sorceress! To-night thou art
The phantom image of a human heart.

—*Henry Tyrrell, in December Godey's.*

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"AS YE SOW!"

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

"Is it snowing yet, Timothy?"

Mrs. Trappe asked the question with a little shiver, as she spread out her thin fingers over the blaze of the wood-fire, whose cheery spires of flame roared half-way up the large, old-fashioned chimney.

Timothy Trappe, her liege lord and husband, had just come in from foddering his cattle—a little, brown-visaged man, with his mouth curiously twisted to one side, a hoary stubble of unshorn beard sprouting out upon his chin, and little gray eyes sparkling from under grizzled brows, as cold and hard as pools of frozen water.

"'Snowing?'" he repeated sharply. "I should think so! Can't see three inches afore one's nose. Piled up everywhere in drifts. And cold as Nova Zembla!"

He shook the snow from his shoulders as he spoke, and settled down into a cushioned easy-chair where the fire-light seemed at once to enfold him as with a mantle of warmth and brightness.

"Oh, dear!" said Mrs. Trappe, dolorously.

"What's the matter now?" acidly demanded her better half. "Ain't there wood enough fetched. Hasn't the roof been new-shingled? And ain't *we* snug enough?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Trappe. "It ain't that, Timothy. I was wondering if poor Bessy had wood enough to warm her this cold night."

Timothy's *lignum-vitæ* face contracted with a sort of involuntary spasm, but he recovered himself with a jerk.

"Always a-grumblin' about something," said he. "I never yet see a woman as was contented."

"Yes, but if Bessy—"

"Bessy's all right," said Timothy, magisterially. "And if she wasn't, it 'u'd be her own fault, a-runnin' off with that there singin'-teacher. Them as makes their bed must expect to lie on it. But that's all past, and there is no call for you to grumble now. I've writ to her to come home, hain't I? I've sent money to pay her way; and I can't do no more than that, can I?"

Mrs. Trappe, who was a lady of constitutionally low spirits, sniffed a faint negative.

"Then why can't you hold your tongue?" demanded Mr. Trappe. "Fetch a pitcher of cider and some o' them doughnuts, and let's be comfortable."

But Mr. Trappe had hardly bitten a piece out of the first crisp and fragrant doughnut before there came a faint knock at the door.

"There!" said Mrs. Trappe. "Who's that? It ain't a night for nobody to be out in!"

Grumbling under his breath, he crossed the narrow entry and laboriously unbolted the front door, with difficulty opening it a few inches against the drift of snow already piled up in its angle.

"Well!" said Mr. Trappe, surlily. "Hello, I say! Who's there?"

At first, he could perceive nothing but the white, blinding wilderness of snow which filled the stormy night air, but as his eyes became accustomed to the darkness he saw a child's figure, wrapped in a coarse shawl, with hair blowing over its eyes.

"If you please, sir," began the little creature, whose eyes were about on a level with the lower waist-button of Timothy's pepper-and-salt-colored waistcoat.

"No!" said Timothy brusquely. "We hain't nothin' for beggars!"

"But, please, sir, my mother—"

"Oh!" snarled Timothy, screwing up his eyes to gain a further outlook into the darkness. "Your mother is there, too, is she? Then it's a clear case o' tramps! P'r'aps your father is there and your uncle and a few more of the family. *No*, I say!"

"But if you would tell me, sir," faltered the child, instinctively retreating before the harsh sound of Timothy Trappe's unmelodious voice.

"I won't tell you nothin'," retorted Timothy, irately. "Clear out, this instant, or I'll set the dogs on ye!"

And, without waiting for a reply, he closed the door again, sliding the bolts into their rusty sockets with a grunt of satisfaction.

"No, you don't!" said Timothy, to himself. "I never yet have harbored any of them tramps, and I never mean to."

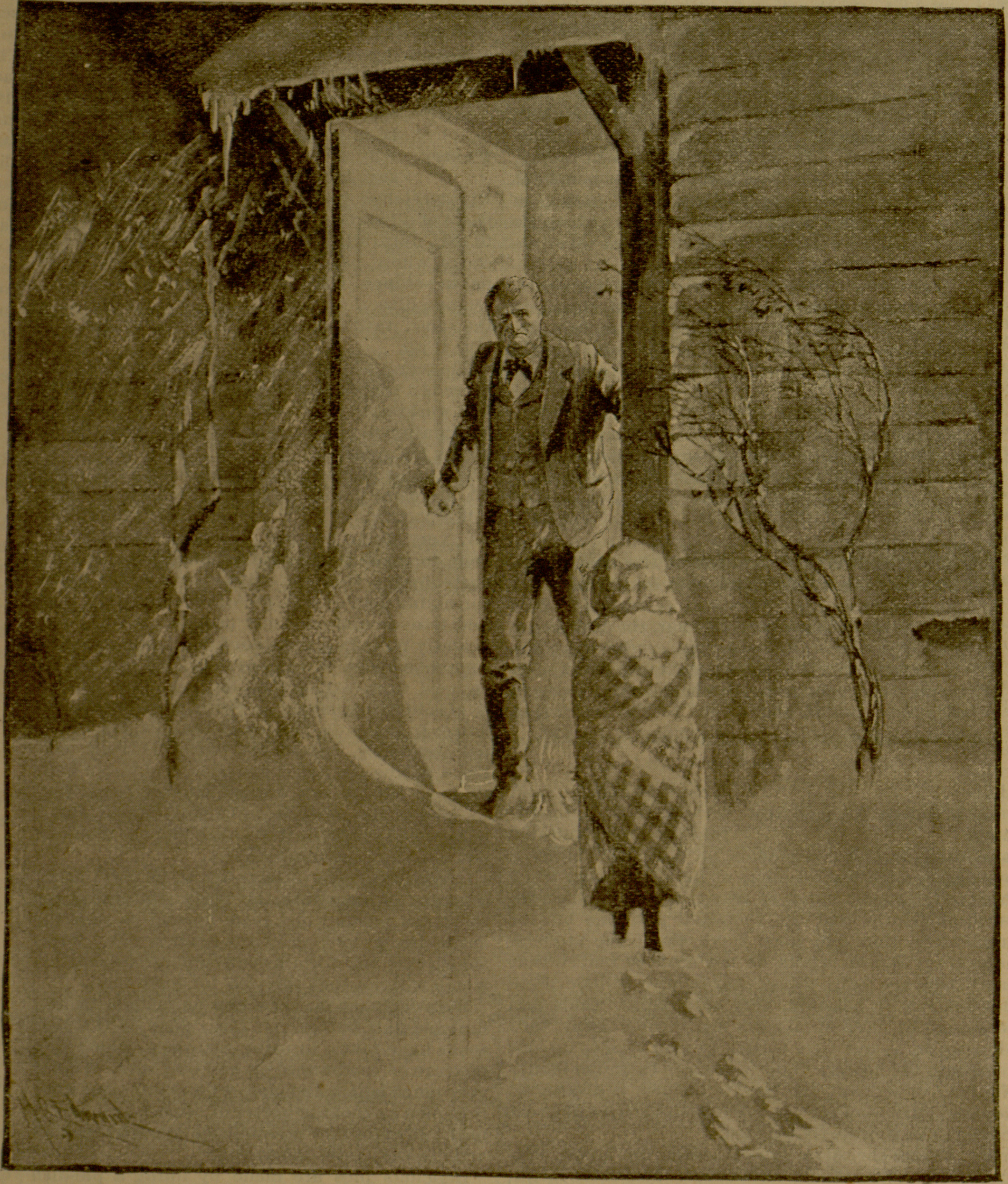
He came back to the room where the lamp beamed a cheerful welcome, and the back log was just breaking into a fresh blaze and reseated himself, with the air of one who has done a laudable thing.

"Who was it?" said Mrs. Trappe, querulously.

"A beggar."

"Man or woman?"

"Nary one nor t'other," answered her husband, sententiously. "It were a little girl."



"HE SAW A CHILD'S FIGURE WRAPPED IN A COARSE SHAWL."

"My patience!" said Mrs. Trappe, straightening herself up. "And you've sent a little girl away in all this storm?"

"Of course, I have," snarled Timothy. "Sent her away? Why shouldn't I? This ain't a free tavern for every beggar, is it?"

"Timothy," said his wife, roused into actual animation at last. "I do believe when the Lord made you He put a lump of granite into the place where your heart ought to ha' been! My, anybody might freeze to death, such a night as this!"

"Well, let 'em!" said Timothy, philosophically. "It ain't no business of mine."

Mrs. Trappe rose up and, walking rheumatically across the floor, flattened her nose against the window-panes.

"If I didn't think she'd got out o' hearing, I'd call her back," said she. "A bed of hay in the barn would be better than no shelter at all, and there's a bit of cold chicken in the pantry and a pitcher of buttermilk."

"The cold chicken will warm up very well for to-morrow's breakfast," said Mr. Trappe. "Willful waste makes woeful want; and I've engaged the buttermilk to Elder Hopkins at four cents a quart. You'd give away everything we've got, if you had *your* way! And you'd fetch up finally in the poor-house!"

Mrs. Trappe hobbled back, mute, to her old place by the fire—she knew very well that her will was to Timothy's but the wave that flings itself with futile force against the solid rock of the shore—and relapsed once more into silence. But, perhaps—who knows?—the impulse of good which had momentarily stirred the sluggish tides of her heart might have counted for something in the pearly pages of the Recording Angel's book!

The next morning, when Timothy Trappe got up, the snow was piled breast-high against the door, the fences were all hidden and the outhouses seemed all to be floating in a sea of white. The tempest was over; the sun was feebly striving to break through a waste of watery clouds, and the wind was as keen as a knife.

"Bless me!" said Timothy, as he wound a red-and-black worsted comforter around his neck and shouldered his snow-shovel, "this 'ere's a reg'lar old-fashioned fall! We hain't had such a storm in twenty year! Hallo, Neighbor Jexon!" as he reached the front gate, "you ain't never tryin' to break the road by yourself! Business must be pressin', if—"

"Business *is* pressing," Neighbor Jexon made reply—a tall, round-shouldered man with kindly gray eyes just visible above the wrappings in which he was enshrouded—"I want you, Timothy Trappe."

"Want *me?* And what, in the name of common sense, do you want with me?" cried out the amazed farmer.

"There was a woman found froze to death, last night, under the stone wall of the apple-orchard by Miles Hawley's cider-mill, with a little girl crying beside her," spoke Jexon, slowly.

"What of that?" said Trappe, recoiling a little as he recollected the child in the worn scarlet shawl and the hair flowing over her face. "It's no business of mine."

"It was your daughter, Bessy Briggan, and her child."

"You're telling me a lie!" shouted Timothy Trappe, clutching at the fence-post for support. "You're a-deceivin' of me! Do you suppose I'm goin' to believe any such story as that?"

"Come and see for yourself," said Jexon, pityingly. "A man who was bringin' a load of barrels to the mill found her there at nine o'clock. Mrs. Hawley took her in, not knowing who she was, and sent for the doctor. The doctor was at my house, with our little croupy Billy, and I took him there in my sleigh. And I knew her the minute I set eyes on her."

"Jexon!" Trappe had clasped his mittened hands before his eyes. "But it ain't true! It can't be! If it was my Bessy, why didn't she come to me—to her own father?"

"Man alive, you forget!" said Jexon, compassionately. "In such a night as last night there wasn't a soul could make their way or tell one point of the compass from another. And when your Bessy was a girl, you lived in the old stone-house by the cross-roads, if you remember."

"True! True!" Trappe spoke faintly, like a man in a dream. "Yes, I'll go with you, Neighbor Jexon, but it will be a mere matter of form. My Bessy would never come home here and perish in a snow-drift almost in sight of her father's house. There's a mistake here—there *must* be!"

* * * * *

"And to think that it was our own little grandchild as Timothy shut the door upon!" wailed Mrs. Trappe, rocking herself from side to side. "To think that he let Bessy die in all the snow and tempest, and us sitting snug and warm by the fire!"

And she relapsed into sobs and tears, while Timothy, sitting opposite her, with a gray pallor on his cheeks and lips set close together, never stirred or spoke.

"His mind is a little touched, I think," said Neighbor Jexon, apprehensively; but Timothy turned and looked him in the face.

"No," said he; "no, it ain't; but I've a queer feeling here," touching his forehead. "Like I fancy a clock must feel when its machinery stops for good and all."

Timothy Trappe was stricken down by paralysis that night, and they buried him in a month.

And when the next snow fell, it wove a cold and sparkling wreath over the old farmer's grave.

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WAITING FOR YOUR IDEAL LADY.

When a young man is in a situation to support a wife and household he should marry. But how long he should wait in making up his mind depends on too many things to be here specified. But a few cautions may be suggested.

1. A man ought to consider what he has to give, as well as what he expects to receive. If one expects all the graces and virtues to reside in a woman—personal beauty, agreeable manners, intelligence, efficiency, prudence, good management, devoutness, affectionateness—by what right does he lay claim to the heart of such a one? What rare creature are *you*, that such a paragon should be yours? Is it modest or manly to suppose that you have only to ask to receive such a noble creature? On what grounds do you claim the alliance of a great soul in a royal form, when you yourself have no equivalent to offer? No man thinks of talking so about anything but women. What if a plain laboring-man should ask: "Shall I buy me a horse now, or wait till I meet my ideal of a horse?" Buy a horse that suits your circumstances and is within the reach of your money.

A young clerk might ask: "Shall I buy me a cottage or wait till I can find an ideal mansion?" But your ideal mansion is far beyond your reach, and a cottage is within it, and as you must live somewhere, you had better choose modestly. In property matters, men accommodate their ideas to their circumstances. They do not wait for ideal clothes or houses or business. They would laugh at the extravagance of waiting for that which was not probable or which might not reasonably be expected to be within their reach.

But men—possibly not that sex alone—picture every imaginable excellence in the chosen one whom Time is bringing to them, and it does not seem to occur to them that it would be a shame to graft a branch from the Tree of Life itself upon a miserable crab of a stick; or to ally one a "little lower than the angels" with a plain, ungifted, ordinary mortal.

2. But there is a wiser method of selection. Let one find one who is fairly his equal, and who will be able, without loss, to adapt herself to him and to his circumstances. Let the partnership be equal. Do not ask her to bring everything and you nothing. If she brings health, good-nature and industry, so must you. If she brings devotion, sacrificing love and a gentle and complying disposition, so must you.

To marry your *ideal* woman may all be very well; but you will have to live with a *real* one. And good health, a good disposition, industrious habits and prudent management will be more to your happiness than all the sentimental excellences in the realm of imagination.

Instead of spending hours in forming an *ideal*, make your own disposition agreeable, your manners gentle, correcting conceit and arrogance and fitting yourself to make an honest and virtuous woman happy. H. W. B.

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SHOPPING AGENTS.

Shopping agents find their patrons among invalids, stay-at-homes and people who live in the country. It is the country people that form the most numerous *clientèle* of the shopping agent, who really is the proxy for his employer.

The shopping agent carries no stock, but must go from shop to shop, as his patron would do, seeking the articles desired. Recompense for this trouble and time is not found in the pleasure of the hunt nor in the delightful sensation of charitable work. The agent is looking for payment in cash as well as is everybody else who engages in any business. The employer pays a commission to the agent and so does the seller of the goods.

Suppose Mrs. A, living in the State of Iowa, employs Mr. B, shopping agent in New York, to buy some articles for her. Mrs. A naturally expects to pay Mr. B an amount that will be a fair compensation for B's time and also his experience; but she expects him to be her representative in every respect; to procure for her the best quality of the things she orders and at the lowest price.

Will he do that?

That he will obtain the best quality is altogether probable, but that he will obtain it at the lowest price is not at all likely, because the majority of the leading dry-goods stores, in fact, all of them but one, hold out inducements to the shopping agents in the shape of discounts in prices on goods purchased from them.

Invariably the agent will fill his order at the store where he will get the greatest personal benefit. In order to made a profit, and also allow discounts to shopping agents that will secure their trade, the dealers must charge the consumer a big percentage above the manufacturer's price for the goods. Thus, when Mrs. A sends an order to Mr. B, she pays his commission and the prices of the goods.

Say the order is for 10 yards of silk at $1.00 a yard. She receives a bill something like this:

Mrs. A,
To Mr. B, *Dr.*
10 yards of silk, at $1.00 per yard - - $10.00
Commission, 5 per cent. - - .50
$10.50

Mr. B receives a bill from the dealer like this:

Mr. B,
To Messrs. T. T. & Co., *Dr.*
10 yards of silk at $1.00 per yard - - $10.00
By discount, 10 per cent. - - 1.00
$9.00

T. T. & Co. do not show their profit in this statement. Should they do so, it would probably be in this form:

10 yards silk, bought at 60c. per yard, sold at $1.00. Profit, 66 2-3 per cent., less 10 per cent. discount given to agent. 50 per cent., or $3.00, on the transaction.

T. T. & Co., no doubt, have a mail-order department; but to customers ordering direct they cannot quote two prices; for that would soon obtain for them a reputation for double-dealing.

The simplest and best plan is that pursued by R. H. Macy & Co., New York. This great house is conducted on the basis of moderate profits and one price to everybody. No commissions or discounts are paid to any one, and the entire establishment is devoted to the interest of the shoppers rather than to that of the proprietors.

This fact is especially emphasized in the mail-order department, where a large force of experienced and expert shoppers are employed to buy goods in the different departments on orders from people who are too far away or too ill or too busy to go in person to the counters. *No charge whatever is made for the services of these experienced shoppers*, who obtain the prices prevailing at the time and are very frequently able to secure the articles desired at figures below catalogue prices because of some special sale in that department at the time. The employees of the mail-order department are paid a salary and do not get additional pay in the way of commissions, or premiums for disposing of slow-selling goods. The interests of the customers are fully protected; every advantage possible secured for them and all at the same prices for the articles bought that the customer would have to pay at the counter.

These prices are the lowest in the country. —*Adv.*

DRINKING FROM A LADY'S SHOE.

In London, a century ago, it was a common practice on the part of the young nobles to drink bumpers to the health of a lady, out of her shoe. The Earl of Cork, in an amusing paper, relates an incident of this kind, and to carry the compliment still further, he states the shoe was ordered to be dressed and served up for supper.

"The cook set himself seriously to work upon it; he pulled the upper part (which was of fine damask) into shreds, and tossed it up into a ragout, minced the sole, cut the wooden heel into thin slices, fried them in batter and placed them around the dish for garnish. The company testified their affection for the lady by eating heartily of this exquisite impromptu."

Within the last score of years, at a dinner of Irish squires, the health of a beautiful girl, whose feet were as pretty as her face, was drunk in champagne from one of her satin shoes, of which an admirer of the lady had contrived to obtain possession.

◆

THREE BLESSINGS IN ONE.

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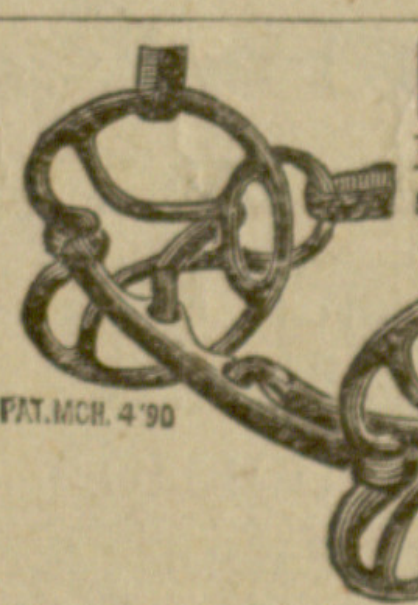

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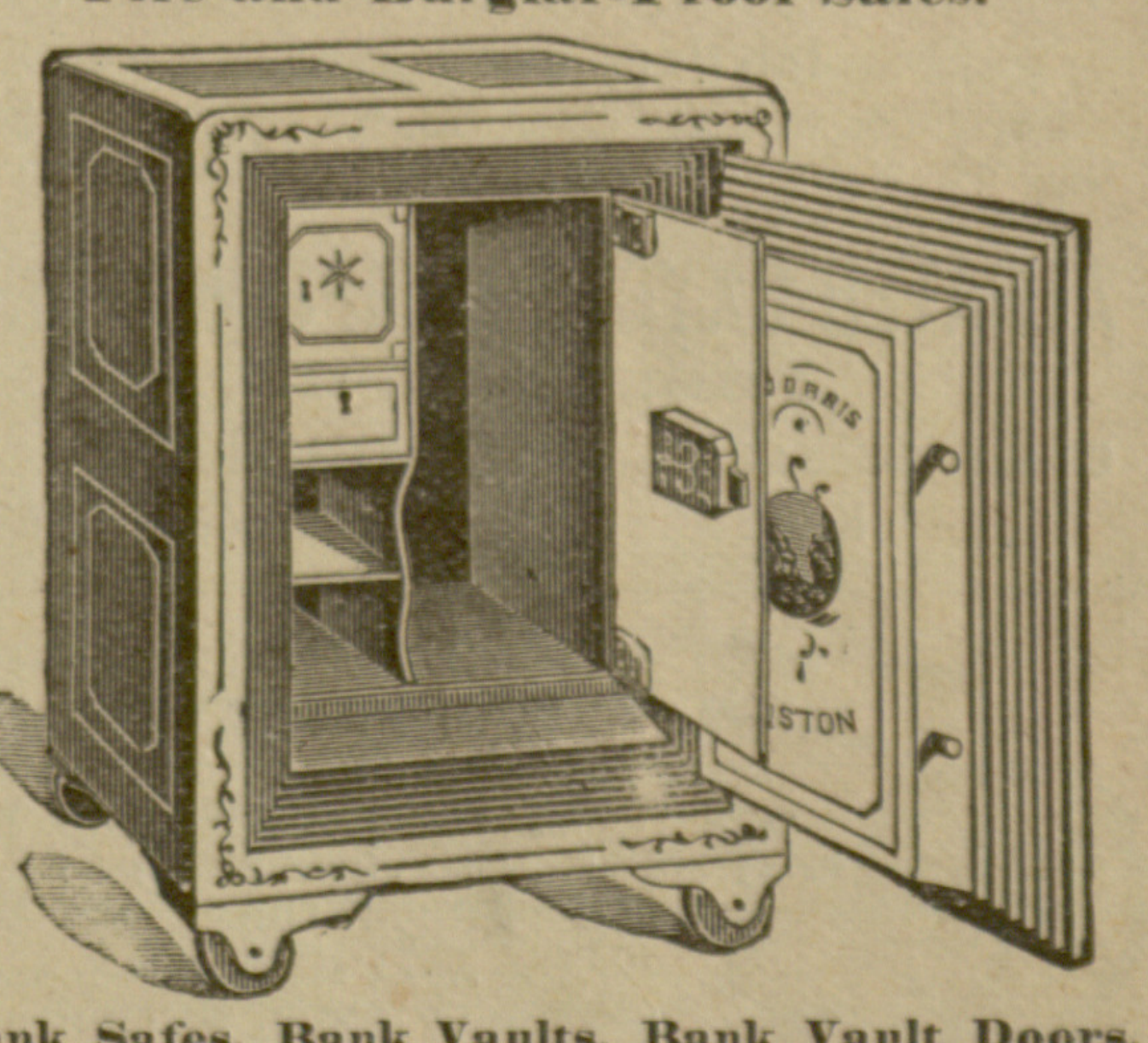

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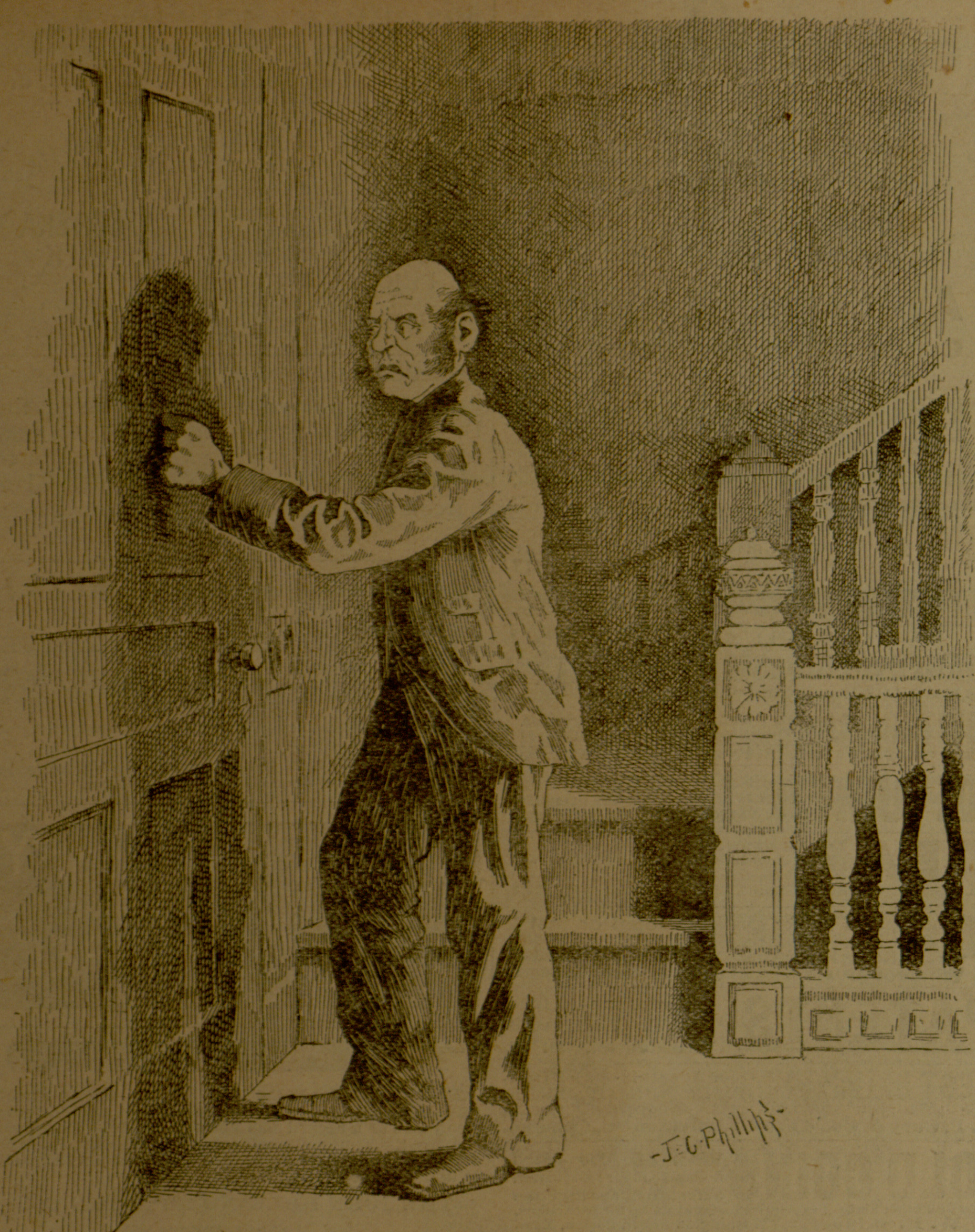

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VOICE: Confound it, what are you waking me up at this time of the morning for?

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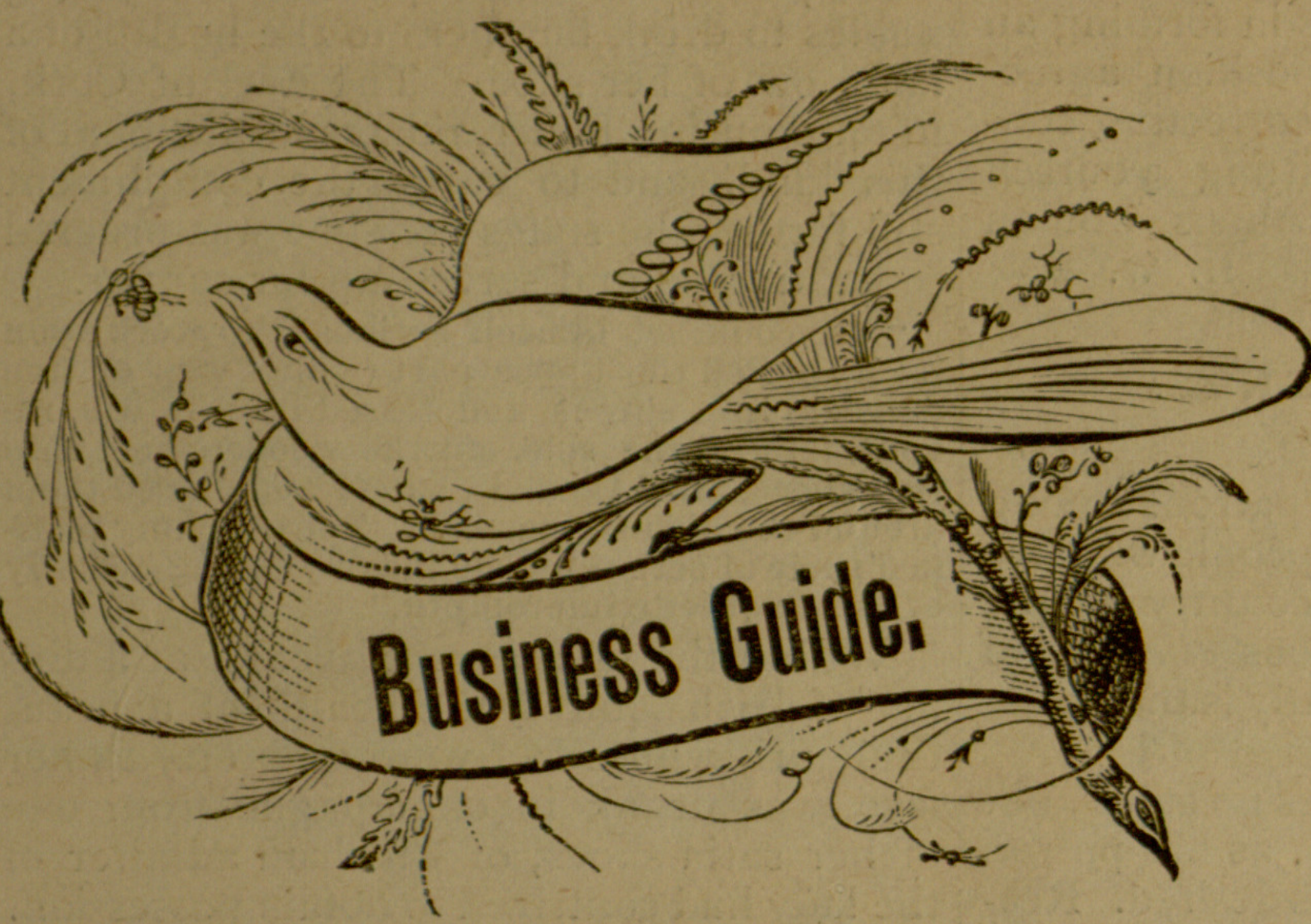
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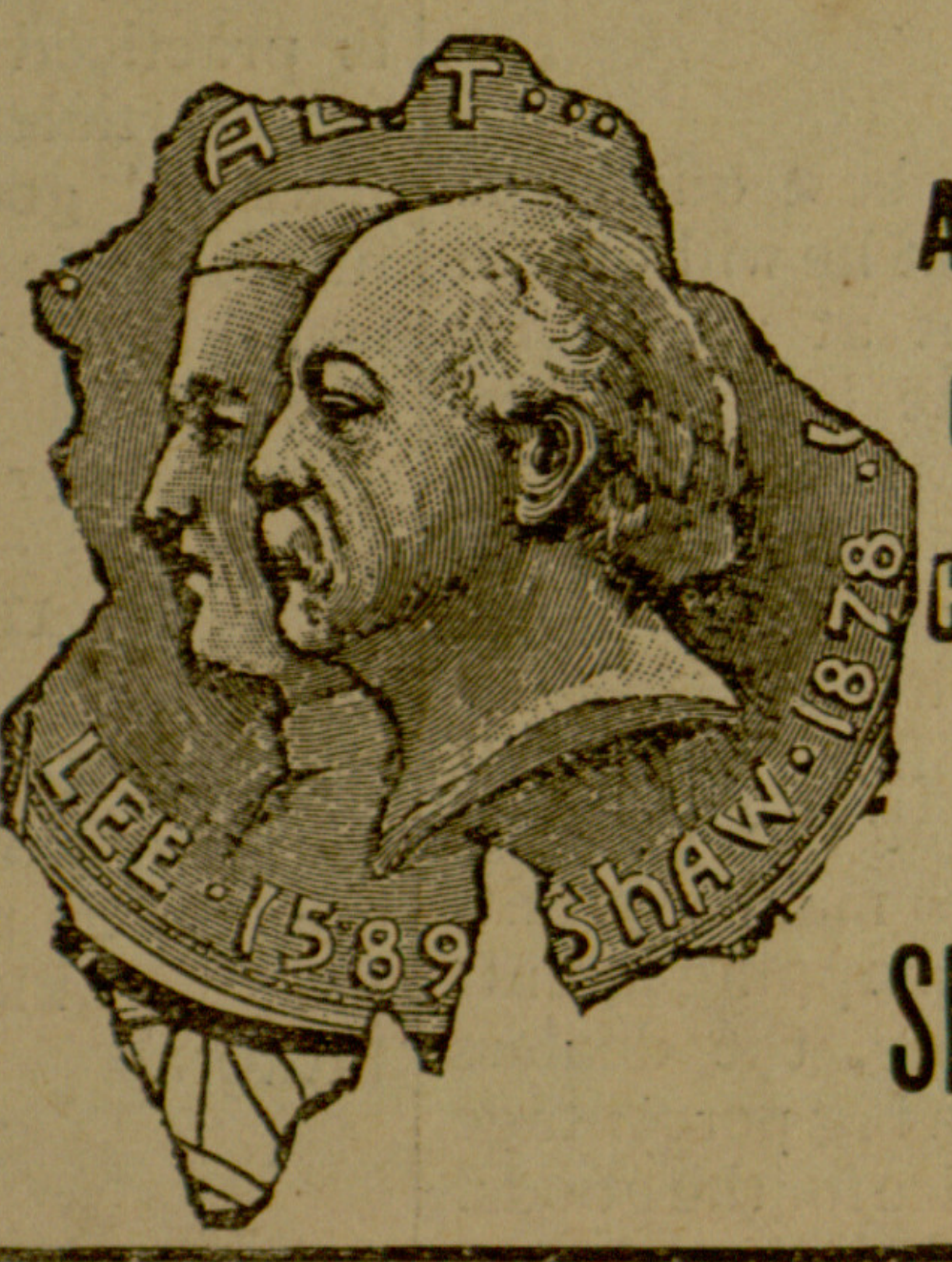

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